

**ТОМАС
БАБИНГТОН
МАКОЛЕЙ**

CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL
ESSAYS. VOLUME 1

Томас Бабингтон Маколей
Critical and Historical
Essays. Volume 1

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Critical and Historical Essays – Volume 1:

Содержание

EDITOR'S NOTE	4
BOOKS OF REFERENCE	11
HALLAM	12
BURLEIGH AND HIS TIMES	134
JOHN HAMPDEN	174
MILTON	251
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	269

Thomas Babington Macaulay

Critical and Historical

Essays – Volume 1

EDITOR'S NOTE

By A. J. Grieve

A French student of English letters (M. Paul Oursel) has written the following lines:

“Depuis deux siècles les Essais forment une branche importante de la littérature anglaise; pour designer un écrivain de cette classe, nos voisins emploient un mot qui n’a pas d’équivalent en français; ils disent: un essayiste. Quo’est-ce qu’un essayiste? L’essayiste se distingue du moraliste, de l’historien, du critique littéraire, du biographe, de l’écrivain politique; et pourtant il emprunte quelque trait a chacun d’eux; il ressemble tour a tour a l’un ou a l’autre; il est aussi philosophe, il est satirique, humoriste a ses heures; il remit en sa personne des qualités multiples; il offre dans ses écrits un spécimen de tous les genres. On voit qu’il n’est pas facile de définir l’essayiste; mais l’exemple suppléera a la définition. On connaîtra exactement le sens du mot quand on aura étudié l’écrivain qui, d’après le jugement de ces compatriotes, est l’essayiste par excellence, ou, comme on disait dans les anciens

cours de littérature, le Prince des essayistes.”

Macaulay is indeed the prince of essayists, and his reign is unchallenged. “I still think—says Professor Saintsbury (Corrected Impressions, p. 89 f.)—that on any subject which Macaulay has touched, his survey is unsurpassable for giving a first bird’s-eye view, and for creating interest in the matter.... And he certainly has not his equal anywhere for covering his subject in the pointing-stick fashion. You need not—you had much better not—pin your faith on his details, but his Pisgah sights are admirable. Hole after hole has been picked in the “Clive” and the “Hastings,” the “Johnson” and the “Addison,” the “Frederick” and the “Horace Walpole,” yet every one of these papers contains sketches, summaries, precis, which have not been made obsolete or valueless by all the work of correction in detail.

Two other appreciations from among the mass of critical literature that has accumulated round Macaulay’s work may be fitly cited, This from Mr. Frederic Harrison:—

“How many men has Macaulay succeeded in reaching, to whom all other history and criticism is a sealed book, or a book in an unknown tongue! If he were a sciolist or a wrongheaded fanatic, this would be a serious evil. But, as he is substantially right in his judgments, brimful of saying common-sense and generous feeling, and profoundly well read in his own periods and his favourite literature, Macaulay has conferred most memorable services on the readers of English throughout the world. He

stands between philosophic historians and the public very much as journals and periodicals stand between the masses and great libraries. Macaulay is a glorified journalist and reviewer, who brings the matured results of scholars to the man in the street in a form that he can remember and enjoy, when he could not make use of a merely learned book. He performs the office of the ballad-maker or story-teller in an age before books were known or were common. And it is largely due to his influence that the best journals and periodicals of our day are written in a style so clear, so direct, so resonant.”

And this from Mr. Cotter Morison

“Macaulay did for the historical essay what Haydn did for the sonata, and Watt for the steam engine; he found it rudimentary and unimportant, and left it complete and a thing of power.... To take a bright period or personage of history, to frame it in a firm outline, to conceive it at once in article-size, and then to fill in this limited canvas with sparkling anecdote, telling bits of colour, and facts, all fused together by a real genius for narrative, was the sort of genre-painting which Macaulay applied to history.... And to this day his essays remain the best of their class, not only in England, but in Europe.... The best would adorn any literature, and even the less successful have a picturesque animation, and convey an impression of power that will not easily be matched. And, again, we need to bear in mind that they were the productions of a writer immersed in business, written in his scanty moments of leisure, when most men would have rested

or sought recreation. Macaulay himself was most modest in his estimate of their value.... It was the public that insisted on their re-issue, and few would be bold enough to deny that the public was right.”

It is to Mr. Morison that the plan followed in the present edition of the Essays is due. In his monograph on Macaulay (English Men of Letters series) he devotes a chapter to the Essays and “with the object of giving as much unity as possible to a subject necessarily wanting it,” classifies the Essays into four groups, (1)English history, (2)Foreign history, (3)Controversial, (4)Critical and Miscellaneous. The articles in the first group are equal in bulk to those of the three other groups put together, and are contained in the first volume of this issue. They form a fairly complete survey of English history from the time of Elizabeth to the later years of the reign of George III, and are fitly introduced by the Essay on Hallam’s History, which forms a kind of summary or microcosm of the whole period.

The scheme might be made still more complete by including certain articles (and especially the exquisite biographies contributed by Macaulay to the Encyclopaedia Britannica) which are published in the volume of “Miscellaneous Writings and Speeches.” Exigencies of space have, however, compelled the limitation of the present edition to the “Essays” usually so-called. These have also been reprinted in the chronological arrangement ordinarily followed (see below) in The Temple Classics (5 vols. 1900), where an exhaustive bibliography, etc.,

has been appended to each Essay.

Chief dates in the life of Thomas Babington Macaulay, afterwards Baron Macaulay:—

1800 (Oct. 25). Birth at Rothley Temple, Leicestershire. 1818-1825. Life at Cambridge (Fellow of Trinity, 1824). 1825. Essay on Milton contributed to *Edinburgh Review*. 1826. Joined the Northern Circuit. 1830 M.P. for Calne (gift of the Marquis of Lansdowne). 1833. M.P. for Leeds. 1834-38. Legal Adviser to the Supreme Council of India. Work at the Indian Penal Code. 1839. M.P. for Edinburgh, and Secretary at War In Melbourne's Cabinet. 1842. *Lays of Ancient Rome*. 1843. Collected edition of the *Essays*. 1847. Rejected at the Election of M.P. for Edinburgh. 1848. *England from the Accession of James II.* vols. i. and ii. 1852. M.P. for Edinburgh; serious illness. 1855. *History of England*, vols. iii. and iv. 1857. Raised to the peerage. 1859 (Dec. 28). Death at Holly Lodge, Kensington. (Buried in Westminster Abbey, 9th January 1860.)

The following are the works of Thomas Babington Macaulay:

Pompeii (Prize poem), 1819; *Evening* (prize poem), 1821; *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1842); *Ivry and the Armada* (*Quarterly Magazine*), added to Edition of 1848; *Critical and Historical Essays* (*Edinburgh Review*), 1843.

The *Essays* originally appeared as follows:

Milton, August 1825; Machiavelli, March 1827; Hallam's "Constitutional History," September 1828; Southey's "Colloquies," January 1830; R. Montgomery's *Poems*, April

1830; Civil Disabilities of Jews, January 1831; Byron, June 1831; Croker's "Boswell," September 1831; Pilgrim's Progress, December 1831; Hampden, December 1831; Burleigh, April 1832; War of Succession in Spain, January 1833; Horace Walpole, October 1833; Lord Chatham, January 1834; Mackintosh's "History of Revolution," July 1835; Bacon, July 1837; Sir William Temple, October 1838; "Gladstone on Church and State," April 1839; Clive, January 1840; Ranke's "History of the Popes," October 1840; Comic Dramatists, January 1841; Lord Holland, July 1841; Warren Hastings, October 1841; Frederick the Great, April 1842; Madame D'Arblay, January 1843; Addison, July 1843; Lord Chatham (2nd Art.), October 1844.

History of England, vols. i. and ii., 1848; vols. iii. and iv., 1855; vol. v., Ed. Lady Trevelyan, 1861; Ed. 8 vols., 1858-62 (Life by Dean Milman); Ed. 4 vols., People's Edition, with Life by Dean Milman, 1863-4; Inaugural Address (Glasgow), 1849; Speeches corrected by himself, 1854 (unauthorized version, 1853, by Vizetelly); Miscellaneous Writings, 2 vols. 1860 (Ed. T. F. Ellis). These include poems, lives (Encyclo. Britt. 8th ed.), and contributions to Quarterly Magazine, and the following from Edinburgh Review:

Dryden, January 1828; History, May 1828; Mill on Government, March 1829; Westminster Reviewer's Defence of Mill, June 1829; Utilitarian Theory of Government, October 1829; Sadler's "Law of Population," July 1830; Sadler's

“Refutation Refuted,” January 1831 Mirabeau, July 1832;
Barere, April 1844.

Complete Works (Ed. Lady Trevelyan), 8 vols., 1866.

BOOKS OF REFERENCE

Sir G.O. Trevelyan: *The Life and Letters Of Lord Macaulay* (2 vols. 8vo., 1876, 2nd ed. with additions, 1877, subsequent editions 1878 and 1881).

J. Cotter Morison: *Macaulay* [*English Men of Letters*], (1882).

Mark Pattison: Art. "Macaulay" in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

Leslie Stephen: *Hours in a Library* [new ed. 1892], ii. 243-376. Art. "Macaulay" in *Dictionary of National Biography*.

Frederic Harrison: *Macaulay's Place in Literature* (1894). *Studies in Early Victorian Literature*, chap. iii. (1895).

G. Saintsbury: *Corrected Impressions*, chaps. ix. x. (1895). *A History of Nineteenth Century Literature*, pp. 224-232 (1896).

P. Oursel: *Les Essais de Lord Macaulay* (1882).

D.H. Macgregor: *Lord Macaulay* (1901).

Sir R.C. Jebb: *Macaulay* (1900).

F.C. Montague. *Macaulay's Essays* (3 vols. 1901).

A. J. G. August 1907.

HALLAM

(September 1828) *The Constitutional History of England, from the Accession of Henry VII. to the Death of George II.* By HENRY HALLAM. In 2 vols. 1827

HISTORY, at least in its state of ideal perfection, is a compound of poetry and philosophy. It impresses general truths on the mind by a vivid representation of particular characters and incidents. But, in fact, the two hostile elements of which it consists have never been known to form a perfect amalgamation; and at length, in our own time, they have been completely and professedly separated. Good histories, in the proper sense of the word, we have not. But we have good historical romances, and good historical essays. The imagination and the reason, if we may use a legal metaphor, have made partition of a province of literature of which they were formerly seized *per my et per tout*; and now they hold their respective portions in severalty, instead of holding the whole in common.

To make the past present, to bring the distant near, to place us in the society of a great man or on the eminence which overlooks the field of a mighty battle, to invest with the reality of human flesh and blood beings whom we are too much inclined to consider as personified qualities in an allegory, to call up our ancestors before us with all their peculiarities of language, manners, and garb, to show us over their houses, to seat us at their

tables, to rummage their old-fashioned ward-robres, to explain the uses of their ponderous furniture, these parts of the duty which properly belongs to the historian have been appropriated by the historical novelist. On the other hand, to extract the philosophy of history, to direct on judgment of events and men, to trace the connection of cause and effects, and to draw from the occurrences of former time general lessons of moral and political wisdom, has become the business of a distinct class of writers.

Of the two kinds of composition into which history has been thus divided, the one may be compared to a map, the other to a painted landscape. The picture, though it places the country before us, does not enable us to ascertain with accuracy the dimensions, the distances, and the angles. The map is not a work of imitative art. It presents no scene to the imagination; but it gives us exact information as to the bearings of the various points, and is a more useful companion to the traveller or the general than the painted landscape could be, though it were the grandest that ever Rosa peopled with outlaws, or the sweetest over which Claude ever poured the mellow effulgence of a setting sun.

It is remarkable that the practice of separating the two ingredients of which history is composed has become prevalent on the Continent as well as in this country. Italy has already produced a historical novel, of high merit and of still higher promise. In France, the practice has been carried to a length somewhat whimsical. M. Sismondi publishes a grave and stately history of the Merovingian Kings, very valuable, and a little

tedious. He then sends forth as a companion to it a novel, in which he attempts to give a lively representation of characters and manners. This course, as it seems to us, has all the disadvantages of a division of labour, and none of its advantages. We understand the expediency of keeping the functions of cook and coachman distinct. The dinner will be better dressed, and the horses better managed. But where the two situations are united, as in the *Maitre Jacques* of Moliere, we do not see that the matter is much mended by the solemn form with which the pluralist passes from one of his employments to the other.

We manage these things better in England. Sir Walter Scott gives us a novel; Mr. Hallam a critical and argumentative history. Both are occupied with the same matter. But the former looks at it with the eye of a sculptor. His intention is to give an express and lively image of its external form. The latter is an anatomist. His task is to dissect the subject to its inmost recesses, and to lay bare before us all the springs of motion and all the causes of decay.

Mr. Hallam is, on the whole, far better qualified than any other writer of our time for the office which he has undertaken. He has great industry and great acuteness. His knowledge is extensive, various, and profound. His mind is equally distinguished by the amplitude of its grasp, and by the delicacy of its tact. His speculations have none of that vagueness which is the common fault of political philosophy. On the contrary, they are strikingly practical, and teach us not only the general rule, but the mode

of applying it to solve particular cases. In this respect they often remind us of the Discourses of Machiavelli.

The style is sometimes open to the charge of harshness. We have also here and there remarked a little of that unpleasant trick, which Gibbon brought into fashion, the trick, we mean, of telling a story by implication and allusion. Mr. Hallam however, has an excuse which Gibbon had not. His work is designed for readers who are already acquainted with the ordinary books on English history, and who can therefore unriddle these little enigmas without difficulty. The manner of the book is, on the whole, not unworthy of the matter. The language, even where most faulty, is weighty and massive, and indicates strong sense in every line. It often rises to an eloquence, not florid or impassioned, but high, grave, and sober; such as would become a state paper, or a judgment delivered by a great magistrate, a Somers or a D'Aguesseau.

In this respect the character of Mr. Hallam's mind corresponds strikingly with that of his style. His work is eminently judicial. Its whole spirit is that of the bench, not that of the bar. He sums up with a calm, steady impartiality, turning neither to the right nor to the left, glossing over nothing, exaggerating nothing, while the advocates on both sides are alternately biting their lips to hear their conflicting misstatements and sophisms exposed. On a general survey, we do not scruple to pronounce the Constitutional History the most impartial book that we ever read. We think it the more incumbent on us to bear this testimony strongly at first

setting out, because, in the course of our remarks, we shall think it right to dwell principally on those parts of it from which we dissent.

There is one peculiarity about Mr. Hallam which, while it adds to the value of his writings, will, we fear, take away something from their popularity. He is less of a worshipper than any historian whom we can call to mind. Every political sect has its esoteric and its exoteric school, its abstract doctrines for the initiated, its visible symbols, its imposing forms, its mythological fables for the vulgar. It assists the devotion of those who are unable to raise themselves to the contemplation of pure truth by all the devices of Pagan or Papal superstition. It has its altars and its deified heroes, its relics and pilgrimages, its canonized martyrs and confessors, its festivals and its legendary miracles. Our pious ancestors, we are told, deserted the High Altar of Canterbury, to lay all their oblations on the shrine of St. Thomas. In the same manner the great and comfortable doctrines of the Tory creed, those particularly which relate to restrictions on worship and on trade, are adored by squires and rectors in Pitt Clubs, under the name of a minister who was as bad a representative of the system which has been christened after him as Becket of the spirit of the Gospel. On the other hand, the cause for which Hampden bled on the field and Sidney on the scaffold is enthusiastically toasted by many an honest radical who would be puzzled to explain the difference between Ship-money and the Habeas Corpus Act. It may be added that, as in religion,

so in politics, few even of those who are enlightened enough to comprehend the meaning latent under the emblems of their faith can resist the contagion of the popular superstition. Often, when they flatter themselves that they are merely feigning a compliance with the prejudices of the vulgar, they are themselves under the influence of those very prejudices. It probably was not altogether on grounds of expediency that Socrates taught his followers to honour the gods whom the state honoured, and bequeathed a cock to Esculapius with his dying breath. So there is often a portion of willing credulity and enthusiasm in the veneration which the most discerning men pay to their political idols. From the very nature of man it must be so. The faculty by which we inseparably associate ideas which have often been presented to us in conjunction is not under the absolute control of the will. It may be quickened into morbid activity. It may be reasoned into sluggishness. But in a certain degree it will always exist. The almost absolute mastery which Mr. Hallam has obtained over feelings of this class is perfectly astonishing to us, and will, we believe, be not only astonishing but offensive to many of his readers. It must particularly disgust those people who, in their speculations on politics, are not reasoners but fanciers; whose opinions, even when sincere, are not produced, according to the ordinary law of intellectual births, by induction or inference, but are equivocally generated by the heat of fervid tempers out of the overflowing of tumid imaginations. A man of this class is always in extremes. He cannot be a friend to liberty without

calling for a community of goods, or a friend to order without taking under his protection the foulest excesses of tyranny. His admiration oscillates between the most worthless of rebels and the most worthless of oppressors, between Marten, the disgrace of the High Court of justice, and Laud, the disgrace of the Star-Chamber. He can forgive anything but temperance and impartiality. He has a certain sympathy with the violence of his opponents, as well as with that of his associates. In every furious partisan he sees either his present self or his former self, the pensioner that is, or the Jacobin that has been. But he is unable to comprehend a writer who, steadily attached to principles, is indifferent about names and badges, and who judges of characters with equable severity, not altogether untinged with cynicism, but free from the slightest touch of passion, party spirit, or caprice.

We should probably like Mr. Hallam's book more if, instead of pointing out with strict fidelity the bright points and the dark spots of both parties, he had exerted himself to whitewash the one and to blacken the other. But we should certainly prize it far less. Eulogy and invective may be had for the asking. But for cold rigid justice, the one weight and the one measure, we know not where else we can look.

No portion of our annals has been more perplexed and misrepresented by writers of different parties than the history of the Reformation. In this labyrinth of falsehood and sophistry, the guidance of Mr. Hallam is peculiarly valuable. It is impossible

not to admire the even-handed justice with which he deals out castigation to right and left on the rival persecutors.

It is vehemently maintained by some writers of the present day that Elizabeth persecuted neither Papists nor Puritans as such, and that the severe measures which she occasionally adopted were dictated, not by religious intolerance, but by political necessity. Even the excellent account of those times which Mr. Hallam has given has not altogether imposed silence on the authors of this fallacy. The title of the Queen, they say, was annulled by the Pope; her throne was given to another; her subjects were incited to rebellion; her life was menaced; every Catholic was bound in conscience to be a traitor; it was therefore against traitors, not against Catholics, that the penal laws were enacted.

In order that our readers may be fully competent to appreciate the merits of this defence, we will state, as concisely as possible, the substance of some of these laws.

As soon as Elizabeth ascended the throne, and before the least hostility to her government had been shown by the Catholic population, an act passed prohibiting the celebration of the rites of the Romish Church on pain of forfeiture for the first offence, of a year's imprisonment for the second, and of perpetual imprisonment for the third.

A law was next made in 1562, enacting, that all who had ever graduated at the Universities or received holy orders, all lawyers, and all magistrates, should take the oath of supremacy when

tendered to them, on pain of forfeiture and imprisonment during the royal pleasure. After the lapse of three months, the oath might again be tendered to them; and if it were again refused, the recusant was guilty of high treason. A prospective law, however severe, framed to exclude Catholics from the liberal professions, would have been mercy itself compared with this odious act. It is a retrospective statute; it is a retrospective penal statute; it is a retrospective penal statute against a large class. We will not positively affirm that a law of this description must always, and under all circumstances, be unjustifiable. But the presumption against it is most violent; nor do we remember any crisis either in our own history, or in the history of any other country, which would have rendered such a provision necessary. In the present case, what circumstances called for extraordinary rigour? There might be disaffection among the Catholics. The prohibition of their worship would naturally produce it. But it is from their situation, not from their conduct, from the wrongs which they had suffered, not from those which they had committed, that the existence of discontent among them must be inferred. There were libels, no doubt, and prophecies, and rumours and suspicions, strange grounds for a law inflicting capital penalties, *ex post facto*, on a large body of men.

Eight years later, the bull of Pius deposing Elizabeth produced a third law. This law, to which alone, as we conceive, the defence now under our consideration can apply, provides that, if any Catholic shall convert a Protestant to the Romish Church, they

shall both suffer death as for high treason.

We believe that we might safely content ourselves with stating the fact, and leaving it to the judgment of every plain Englishman. Recent controversies have, however, given so much importance to this subject, that we will offer a few remarks on it.

In the first place, the arguments which are urged in favour of Elizabeth apply with much greater force to the case of her sister Mary. The Catholics did not, at the time of Elizabeth's accession, rise in arms to seat a Pretender on her throne. But before Mary had given, or could give, provocation, the most distinguished Protestants attempted to set aside her rights in favour of the Lady Jane. That attempt, and the subsequent insurrection of Wyatt, furnished at least as good a plea for the burning of Protestants, as the conspiracies against Elizabeth furnish for the hanging and embowelling of Papists.

The fact is that both pleas are worthless alike. If such arguments are to pass current, it will be easy to prove that there was never such a thing as religious persecution since the creation. For there never was a religious persecution in which some odious crime was not, justly or unjustly, said to be obviously deducible from the doctrines of the persecuted party. We might say, that the Caesars did not persecute the Christians; that they only punished men who were charged, rightly or wrongly, with burning Rome, and with committing the foulest abominations in secret assemblies; and that the refusal to throw frankincense on the altar of Jupiter was not the crime, but only evidence of

the crime. We might say, that the massacre of St. Bartholomew was intended to extirpate, not a religious sect, but a political party. For, beyond all doubt, the proceedings of the Huguenots, from the conspiracy of Amboise to the battle of Moncontour, had given much more trouble to the French monarchy than the Catholics have ever given to the English monarchy since the Reformation; and that too with much less excuse.

The true distinction is perfectly obvious. To punish a man because he has committed a crime, or because he is believed, though unjustly, to have committed a crime, is not persecution. To punish a man, because we infer from the nature of some doctrine which he holds, or from the conduct of other persons who hold the same doctrines with him, that he will commit a crime is persecution, and is, in every case, foolish and wicked.

When Elizabeth put Ballard and Babington to death, she was not persecuting. Nor should we have accused her government of persecution for passing any law, however severe, against overt acts of sedition. But to argue that, because a man is a Catholic, he must think it right to murder a heretical sovereign, and that because he thinks it right, he will attempt to do it, and then, to found on this conclusion a law for punishing him as if he had done it, is plain persecution.

If, indeed, all men reasoned in the same manner on the same data, and always did what they thought it their duty to do, this mode of dispensing punishment might be extremely judicious. But as people who agree about premises often disagree about

conclusions, and as no man in the world acts up to his own standard of right, there are two enormous gaps in the logic by which alone penalties for opinions can be defended. The doctrine of reprobation, in the judgment of many very able men, follows by syllogistic necessity from the doctrine of election. Others conceive that the Antinomian heresy directly follows from the doctrine of reprobation; and it is very generally thought that licentiousness and cruelty of the worst description are likely to be the fruits, as they often have been the fruits, of Antinomian opinions. This chain of reasoning, we think, is as perfect in all its parts as that which makes out a Papist to be necessarily a traitor. Yet it would be rather a strong measure to hang all the Calvinists, on the ground that if they were spared, they would infallibly commit all the atrocities of Matthias and Knipperdoling. For, reason the matter as we may, experience shows us that a man may believe in election without believing in reprobation, that he may believe in reprobation without being an Antinomian, and that he may be an Antinomian without being a bad citizen. Man, in short, is so inconsistent a creature that it is impossible to reason from his belief to his conduct, or from one part of his belief to another.

We do not believe that every Englishman who was reconciled to the Catholic Church would, as a necessary consequence, have thought himself justified in deposing or assassinating Elizabeth. It is not sufficient to say that the convert must have acknowledged the authority of the Pope, and that the Pope had issued a bull against the Queen. We know through what strange loopholes

the human mind contrives to escape, when it wishes to avoid a disagreeable inference from an admitted proposition. We know how long the Jansenists contrived to believe the Pope infallible in matters of doctrine, and at the same time to believe doctrines which he pronounced to be heretical. Let it pass, however, that every Catholic in the kingdom thought that Elizabeth might be lawfully murdered. Still the old maxim, that what is the business of everybody is the business of nobody, is particularly likely to hold good in a case in which a cruel death is the almost inevitable consequence of making any attempt.

Of the ten thousand clergymen of the Church of England, there is scarcely one who would not say that a man who should leave his country and friends to preach the Gospel among savages, and who should, after labouring indefatigably without any hope of reward, terminate his life by martyrdom, would deserve the warmest admiration. Yet we can doubt whether ten of the ten thousand ever thought of going on such an expedition. Why should we suppose that conscientious motives, feeble as they are constantly found to be in a good cause, should be omnipotent for evil? Doubtless there was many a jolly Popish priest in the old manor-houses of the northern counties, who would have admitted, in theory, the deposing power of the Pope, but who would not have been ambitious to be stretched on the rack, even though it were to be used, according to the benevolent proviso of Lord Burleigh, "as charitably as such a thing can be," or to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, even though, by

that rare indulgence which the Queen, of her special grace, certain knowledge, and mere motion, sometimes extended to very mitigated cases, he were allowed a fair time to choke before the hangman began to grabble in his entrails.

But the laws passed against the Puritans had not even the wretched excuse which we have been considering. In this case, the cruelty was equal, the danger, infinitely less. In fact, the danger was created solely by the cruelty. But it is superfluous to press the argument. By no artifice of ingenuity can the stigma of persecution, the worst blemish of the English Church, be effaced or patched over. Her doctrines, we well know, do not tend to intolerance. She admits the possibility of salvation out of her own pale. But this circumstance, in itself honourable to her, aggravates the sin and the shame of those who persecuted in her name. Dominic and De Montfort did not, at least, murder and torture for differences of opinion which they considered as trifling. It was to stop an infection which, as they believed, hurried to certain perdition every soul which it seized, that they employed their fire and steel. The measures of the English government with respect to the Papists and Puritans sprang from a widely different principle. If those who deny that the founders of the Church were guilty of religious persecution mean only that the founders of the Church were not influenced by any religious motive, we perfectly agree with them. Neither the penal code of Elizabeth, nor the more hateful system by which Charles the Second attempted to force Episcopacy on the Scotch, had an

origin so noble. The cause is to be sought in some circumstances which attended the Reformation in England, circumstances of which the effects long continued to be felt, and may in some degree be traced even at the present day.

In Germany, in France, in Switzerland, and in Scotland, the contest against the Papal power was essentially a religious contest. In all those countries, indeed, the cause of the Reformation, like every other great cause, attracted to itself many supporters influenced by no conscientious principle, many who quitted the Established Church only because they thought her in danger, many who were weary of her restraints, and many who were greedy for her spoils. But it was not by these adherents that the separation was there conducted. They were welcome auxiliaries; their support was too often purchased by unworthy compliances; but, however exalted in rank or power, they were not the leaders in the enterprise. Men of a widely different description, men who redeemed great infirmities and errors by sincerity, disinterestedness, energy and courage, men who, with many of the vices of revolutionary chiefs and of polemic divines, united some of the highest qualities of apostles, were the real directors. They might be violent in innovation and scurrilous in controversy. They might sometimes act with inexcusable severity towards opponents, and sometimes connive disreputably at the vices of powerful allies. But fear was not in them, nor hypocrisy, nor avarice, nor any petty selfishness. Their one great object was the demolition of the idols and the purification of the sanctuary.

If they were too indulgent to the failings of eminent men from whose patronage they expected advantage to the church, they never flinched before persecuting tyrants and hostile armies. For that theological system to which they sacrificed the lives of others without scruple, they were ready to throw away their own lives without fear. Such were the authors of the great schism on the Continent and in the northern part of this island. The Elector of Saxony and the Landgrave of Hesse, the Prince of Conde and the King of Navarre, the Earl of Moray and the Earl of Morton, might espouse the Protestant opinions, or might pretend to espouse them; but it was from Luther, from Calvin, from Knox, that the Reformation took its character.

England has no such names to show; not that she wanted men of sincere piety, of deep learning, of steady and adventurous courage. But these were thrown into the background. Elsewhere men of this character were the principals. Here they acted a secondary part. Elsewhere worldliness was the tool of zeal. Here zeal was the tool of worldliness. A King, whose character may be best described by saying that he was despotism itself personified, unprincipled ministers, a rapacious aristocracy, a servile Parliament, such were the instruments by which England was delivered from the yoke of Rome. The work which had been begun by Henry, the murderer of his wives, was continued by Somerset, the murderer of his brother, and completed by Elizabeth, the murderer of her guest. Sprung from brutal passion, nurtured by selfish policy, the Reformation in England displayed

little of what had, in other countries, distinguished it; unflinching and unsparing devotion, boldness of speech, and singleness of eye. These were indeed to be found; but it was in the lower ranks of the party which opposed the authority of Rome, in such men as Hooper, Latimer, Rogers, and Taylor. Of those who had any important share in bringing the Reformation about, Ridley was perhaps the only person who did not consider it as a mere political job. Even Ridley did not play a very prominent part. Among the statesmen and prelates who principally gave the tone to the religious changes, there is one, and one only, whose conduct partiality itself can attribute to any other than interested motives. It is not strange, therefore, that his character should have been the subject of fierce controversy. We need not say that we speak of Cranmer.

Mr. Hallam has been severely censured for saying with his usual placid severity, that, "if we weigh the character of this prelate in an equal balance, he will appear far indeed removed from the turpitude imputed to him, by his enemies; yet not entitled to any extraordinary veneration." We will venture to expand the sense of Mr. Hallam, and to comment on it thus:—If we consider Cranmer merely as a statesman, he will not appear a much worse man than Wolsey, Gardiner, Cromwell, or Somerset. But, when an attempt is made to set him up as a saint, it is scarcely possible for any man of sense who knows the history of the times to preserve his gravity. If the memory of the archbishop had been left to find its own place, he would have soon been lost among

the crowd which is mingled

“A quel cattivo coro
Degli angeli, che non furon ribelli,
Ne fur fedelia Dio, per se foro.”

And the only notice which it would have been necessary to take of his name would have been

“Non ragioniam di lui; ma guarda, e passa.”

But, since his admirers challenge for him a place in the noble army of martyrs, his claims require fuller discussion.

The origin of his greatness, common enough in the scandalous chronicles of courts, seems strangely out of place in a hagiology. Cranmer rose into favour by serving Henry in the disgraceful affair of his first divorce. He promoted the marriage of Anne Boleyn with the King. On a frivolous pretence he pronounced that marriage null and void. On a pretence, if possible still more frivolous, he dissolved the ties which bound the shameless tyrant to Anne of Cleves. He attached himself to Cromwell while the fortunes of Cromwell flourished. He voted for cutting off Cromwell's head without a trial, when the tide of royal favour turned. He conformed backwards and forwards as the King changed his mind. He assisted, while Henry lived, in condemning to the flames those who denied the doctrine of transubstantiation. He found out, as soon as Henry was dead, that the doctrine

was false. He was, however, not at a loss for people to burn. The authority of his station and of his grey hairs was employed to overcome the disgust with which an intelligent and virtuous child regarded persecution. Intolerance is always bad. But the sanguinary intolerance of a man who thus wavered in his creed excites a loathing, to which it is difficult to give vent without calling foul names. Equally false to political and to religious obligations, the primate was first the tool of Somerset, and then the tool of Northumberland. When the Protector wished to put his own brother to death, without even the semblance of a trial, he found a ready instrument in Cranmer. In spite of the canon law, which forbade a churchman to take any part in matters of blood, the archbishop signed the warrant for the atrocious sentence. When Somerset had been in his turn destroyed, his destroyer received the support of Cranmer in a wicked attempt to change the course of the succession.

The apology made for him by his admirers only renders his conduct more contemptible. He complied, it is said, against his better judgment, because he could not resist the entreaties of Edward. A holy prelate of sixty, one would think, might be better employed by the bedside of a dying child, than in committing crimes at the request of the young disciple. If Cranmer had shown half as much firmness when Edward requested him to commit treason as he had before shown when Edward requested him not to commit murder, he might have saved the country from one of the greatest misfortunes that it ever underwent. He

became, from whatever motive, the accomplice of the worthless Dudley. The virtuous scruples of another young and amiable mind were to be overcome. As Edward had been forced into persecution, Jane was to be seduced into treason. No transaction in our annals is more unjustifiable than this. If a hereditary title were to be respected, Mary possessed it. If a parliamentary title were preferable, Mary possessed that also. If the interest of the Protestant religion required a departure from the ordinary rule of succession, that interest would have been best served by raising Elizabeth to the throne. If the foreign relations of the kingdom were considered, still stronger reasons might be found for preferring Elizabeth to Jane. There was great doubt whether Jane or the Queen of Scotland had the better claim; and that doubt would, in all probability, have produced a war both with Scotland and with France, if the project of Northumberland had not been blasted in its infancy. That Elizabeth had a better claim than the Queen of Scotland was indisputable. To the part which Cranmer, and unfortunately some better men than Cranmer, took in this most reprehensible scheme, much of the severity with which the Protestants were afterwards treated must in fairness be ascribed.

The plot failed; Popery triumphed; and Cranmer recanted. Most people look on his recantation as a single blemish on an honourable life, the frailty of an unguarded moment. But, in fact, his recantation was in strict accordance with the system on which he had constantly acted. It was part of a regular habit. It was not

the first recantation that he had made; and, in all probability, if it had answered its purpose, it would not have been the last. We do not blame him for not choosing to be burned alive. It is no very severe reproach to any person that he does not possess heroic fortitude. But surely a man who liked the fire so little should have had some sympathy for others. A persecutor who inflicts nothing which he is not ready to endure deserves some respect. But when a man who loves his doctrines more than the lives of his neighbours, loves his own little finger better than his doctrines, a very simple argument a fortiori will enable us to estimate the amount of his benevolence.

But his martyrdom, it is said, redeemed everything. It is extraordinary that so much ignorance should exist on this subject. The fact is that, if a martyr be a man who chooses to die rather than to renounce his opinions, Cranmer was no more a martyr than Dr. Dodd. He died solely because he could not help it. He never retracted his recantation till he found he had made it in vain. The Queen was fully resolved that, Catholic or Protestant, he should burn. Then he spoke out, as people generally speak out when they are at the point of death and have nothing to hope or to fear on earth. If Mary had suffered him to live, we suspect that he would have heard mass and received absolution, like a good Catholic, till the accession of Elizabeth, and that he would then have purchased, by another apostasy, the power of burning men better and braver than himself.

We do not mean, however, to represent him as a monster of

wickedness. He was not wantonly cruel or treacherous. He was merely a supple, timid, interested courtier, in times of frequent and violent change. That which has always been represented as his distinguishing virtue, the facility with which he forgave his enemies, belongs to the character. Slaves of his class are never vindictive, and never grateful. A present interest effaces past services and past injuries from their minds together. Their only object is self-preservation; and for this they conciliate those who wrong them, just as they abandon those who serve them. Before we extol a man for his forgiving temper, we should inquire whether he is above revenge, or below it.

Somerset had as little principle as his coadjutor. Of Henry, an orthodox Catholic, except that he chose to be his own Pope, and of Elizabeth, who certainly had no objection to the theology of Rome, we need say nothing. These four persons were the great authors of the English Reformation. Three of them had a direct interest in the extension of the royal prerogative. The fourth was the ready tool of any who could frighten him. It is not difficult to see from what motives, and on what plan, such persons would be inclined to remodel the Church. The scheme was merely to transfer the full cup of sorceries from the Babylonian enchantress to other hands, spilling as little as possible by the way. The Catholic doctrines and rites were to be retained in the Church of England. But the King was to exercise the control which had formerly belonged to the Roman Pontiff. In this Henry for a time succeeded. The extraordinary

force of his character, the fortunate situation in which he stood with respect to foreign powers, and the vast resources which the suppression of the monasteries placed at his disposal, enabled him to oppress both the religious factions equally. He punished with impartial severity those who renounced the doctrines of Rome, and those who acknowledged her jurisdiction. The basis, however, on which he attempted to establish his power was too narrow to be durable. It would have been impossible even for him long to persecute both persuasions. Even under his reign there had been insurrections on the part of the Catholics, and signs of a spirit which was likely soon to produce insurrection on the part of the Protestants. It was plainly necessary, therefore, that the Crown should form an alliance with one or with the other side. To recognise the Papal supremacy, would have been to abandon the whole design. Reluctantly and sullenly the government at last joined the Protestants. In forming this junction, its object was to procure as much aid as possible for its selfish undertaking, and to make the smallest possible concessions to the spirit of religious innovation.

From this compromise the Church of England sprang. In many respects, indeed, it has been well for her that, in an age of exuberant zeal, her principal founders were mere politicians. To this circumstance she owes her moderate articles, her decent ceremonies, her noble and pathetic liturgy. Her worship is not disfigured by mummery. Yet she has preserved, in a far greater degree than any of her Protestant sisters, that art of striking the

senses and filling the imagination in which the Catholic Church so eminently excels. But, on the other hand, she continued to be, for more than a hundred and fifty years, the servile handmaid of monarchy, the steady enemy of public liberty. The divine right of kings, and the duty of passively obeying all their commands, were her favourite tenets. She held those tenets firmly through times of oppression, persecution, and licentiousness; while law was trampled down; while judgment was perverted; while the people were eaten as though they were bread. Once, and but once, for a moment, and but for a moment, when her own dignity and property were touched, she forgot to practise the submission which she had taught.

Elizabeth clearly discerned the advantages which were to be derived from a close connection between the monarchy and the priesthood. At the time of her accession, indeed, she evidently meditated a partial reconciliation with Rome; and, throughout her whole life, she leaned strongly to some of the most obnoxious parts of the Catholic system. But her imperious temper, her keen sagacity, and her peculiar situation, soon led her to attach herself completely to a church which was all her own. On the same principle on which she joined it, she attempted to drive all her people within its pale by persecution. She supported it by severe penal laws, not because she thought conformity to its discipline necessary to salvation; but because it was the fastness which arbitrary power was making strong for itself, because she expected a more profound obedience from those who saw in

her both their civil and their ecclesiastical chief than from those who, like the Papists, ascribed spiritual authority to the Pope, or from those who, like some of the Puritans, ascribed it only to Heaven. To dissent from her establishment was to dissent from an institution founded with an express view to the maintenance and extension of the royal prerogative.

This great Queen and her successors, by considering conformity and loyalty as identical at length made them so. With respect to the Catholics, indeed, the rigour of persecution abated after her death. James soon found that they were unable to injure him, and that the animosity which the Puritan party felt towards them drove them of necessity to take refuge under his throne. During the subsequent conflict, their fault was anything but disloyalty. On the other hand, James hated the Puritans with more than the hatred of Elizabeth. Her aversion to them was political; his was personal. The sect had plagued him in Scotland, where he was weak; and he was determined to be even with them in England, where he was powerful. Persecution gradually changed a sect into a faction. That there was anything in the religious opinions of the Puritans which rendered them hostile to monarchy has never been proved to our satisfaction. After our civil contests, it became the fashion to say that Presbyterianism was connected with Republicanism; just as it has been the fashion to say, since the time of the French Revolution, that Infidelity is connected with Republicanism. It is perfectly true that a church constituted on the Calvinistic model will not strengthen

the hands of the sovereign so much as a hierarchy which consists of several ranks, differing in dignity and emolument, and of which all the members are constantly looking to the Government for promotion. But experience has clearly shown that a Calvinistic church, like every other church, is disaffected when it is persecuted, quiet when it is tolerated, and actively loyal when it is favoured and cherished. Scotland has had a Presbyterian establishment during a century and a half. Yet her General Assembly has not, during that period, given half so much trouble to the government as the Convocation of the Church of England gave during the thirty years which followed the Revolution. That James and Charles should have been mistaken in this point is not surprising. But we are astonished, we must confess, that men of our own time, men who have before them the proof of what toleration can effect, men who may see with their own eyes that the Presbyterians are no such monsters when government is wise enough to let them alone, should defend the persecutions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as indispensable to the safety of the church and the throne.

How persecution protects churches and thrones was soon made manifest. A systematic political opposition, vehement, daring, and inflexible, sprang from a schism about trifles, altogether unconnected with the real interests of religion or of the state. Before the close of the reign of Elizabeth this opposition began to show itself. It broke forth on the question of the monopolies. Even the imperial Lioness was compelled to

abandon her prey, and slowly and fiercely to recede before the assailants. The spirit of liberty grew with the growing wealth and intelligence of the people. The feeble struggles and insults of James irritated instead of suppressing it; and the events which immediately followed the accession of his son portended a contest of no common severity, between a king resolved to be absolute, and a people resolved to be free.

The famous proceedings of the third Parliament of Charles, and the tyrannical measures which followed its dissolution, are extremely well described by Mr. Hallam. No writer, we think, has shown, in so clear and satisfactory a manner, that the Government then entertained a fixed purpose of destroying the old parliamentary constitution of England, or at least of reducing it to a mere shadow. We hasten, however, to a part of his work which, though it abounds in valuable information and in remarks well deserving to be attentively considered, and though it is, like the rest, evidently written in a spirit of perfect impartiality, appears to us, in many points, objectionable.

We pass to the year 1640. The fate of the short Parliament held in that year clearly indicated the views of the king. That a Parliament so moderate in feeling should have met after so many years of oppression is truly wonderful. Hyde extols its loyal and conciliatory spirit. Its conduct, we are told, made the excellent Falkland in love with the very name of Parliament. We think, indeed, with Oliver St. John, that its moderation was carried too far, and that the times required sharper and more

decided councils. It was fortunate, however, that the king had another opportunity of showing that hatred of the liberties of his subjects which was the ruling principle of all his conduct. The sole crime of the Commons was that, meeting after a long intermission of parliaments, and after a long series of cruelties and illegal imposts, they seemed inclined to examine grievances before they would vote supplies. For this insolence they were dissolved almost as soon as they met.

Defeat, universal agitation, financial embarrassments, disorganisation in every part of the government, compelled Charles again to convene the Houses before the close of the same year. Their meeting was one of the great eras in the history of the civilised world. Whatever of political freedom exists either in Europe or in America has sprung, directly or indirectly, from those institutions which they secured and reformed. We never turn to the annals of those times without feeling increased admiration of the patriotism, the energy, the decision, the consummate wisdom, which marked the measures of that great Parliament, from the day on which it met to the commencement of civil hostilities.

The impeachment of Strafford was the first, and perhaps the greatest blow. The whole conduct of that celebrated man proved that he had formed a deliberate scheme to subvert the fundamental laws of England. Those parts of his correspondence which have been brought to light since his death, place the matter beyond a doubt. One of his admirers has, indeed, offered to show

“that the passages which Mr. Hallam has invidiously extracted from the correspondence between Laud and Strafford, as proving their design to introduce a thorough tyranny, refer not to any such design, but to a thorough reform in the affairs of state, and the thorough maintenance of just authority.” We will recommend two or three of these passages to the especial notice of our readers.

All who know anything of those times, know that the conduct of Hampden in the affair of the ship-money met with the warm approbation of every respectable Royalist in England. It drew forth the ardent eulogies of the champions of the prerogative and even of the Crown lawyers themselves. Clarendon allows Hampden’s demeanour through the whole proceeding to have been such, that even those who watched for an occasion against the defender of the people, were compelled to acknowledge themselves unable to find any fault in him. That he was right in the point of law is now universally admitted. Even had it been otherwise, he had a fair case. Five of the judges, servile as our Courts then were, pronounced in his favour. The majority against him was the smallest possible. In no country retaining the slightest vestige of constitutional liberty can a modest and decent appeal to the laws be treated as a crime. Strafford, however, recommends that, for taking the sense of a legal tribunal on a legal question, Hampden should be punished, and punished severely, “whipt,” says the insolent apostate, “whipt into his senses. If the rod,” he adds, “be so used that it smarts not, I am

the more sorry.” This is the maintenance of just authority.

In civilised nations, the most arbitrary governments have generally suffered justice to have a free course in private suits. Strafford wished to make every cause in every court subject to the royal prerogative. He complained that in Ireland he was not permitted to meddle in cases between party and party. “I know very well,” says he, “that the common lawyers will be passionately against it, who are wont to put such a prejudice upon all other professions, as if none were to be trusted, or capable to administer justice, but themselves: yet how well this suits with monarchy, when they monopolise all to be governed by their year-books, you in England have a costly example.” We are really curious to know by what arguments it is to be proved, that the power of interfering in the law-suits of individuals is part of the just authority of the executive government.

It is not strange that a man so careless of the common civil rights, which even despots have generally respected, should treat with scorn the limitations which the constitution imposes on the royal prerogative. We might quote pages: but we will content ourselves with a single specimen: “The debts of the Crown being taken off, you may govern as you please: and most resolute I am that may be done without borrowing any help forth of the King’s lodgings.”

Such was the theory of that thorough reform in the state which Strafford meditated. His whole practice, from the day on which he sold himself to the court, was in strict conformity to

his theory. For his accomplices various excuses may be urged; ignorance, imbecility, religious bigotry. But Wentworth had no such plea. His intellect was capacious. His early prepossessions were on the side of popular rights. He knew the whole beauty and value of the system which he attempted to deface. He was the first of the Rats, the first of those statesmen whose patriotism has been only the coquetry of political prostitution, and whose profligacy has taught governments to adopt the old maxim of the slave-market, that it is cheaper to buy than to breed, to import defenders from an Opposition than to rear them in a Ministry. He was the first Englishman to whom a peerage was a sacrament of infamy, a baptism into the communion of corruption. As he was the earliest of the hateful list, so was he also by far the greatest; eloquent, sagacious, adventurous, intrepid, ready of invention, immutable of purpose, in every talent which exalts or destroys nations pre-eminent, the lost Archangel, the Satan of the apostasy. The title for which, at the time of his desertion, he exchanged a name honourably distinguished in the cause of the people, reminds us of the appellation which, from the moment of the first treason, fixed itself on the fallen Son of the Morning,

“Satan;—so call him now—
His former name
Is heard no more in heaven.”

The defection of Strafford from the popular party contributed mainly to draw on him the hatred of his contemporaries. It has

since made him an object of peculiar interest to those whose lives have been spent, like his, in proving that there is no malice like the malice of a renegade; Nothing can be more natural or becoming than that one turncoat should eulogize another.

Many enemies of public liberty have been distinguished by their private virtues. But Strafford was the same throughout. As was the statesman, such was the kinsman and such the lover. His conduct towards Lord Mountmorris is recorded by Clarendon. For a word which can scarcely be called rash, which could not have been made the subject of an ordinary civil action, the Lord Lieutenant dragged a man of high rank, married to a relative of that saint about whom he whimpered to the peers, before a tribunal of slaves. Sentence of death was passed. Everything but death was inflicted. Yet the treatment which Lord Ely experienced was still more scandalous. That nobleman was thrown into prison, in order to compel him to settle his estate in a manner agreeable to his daughter-in-law, whom, as there is every reason to believe, Strafford had debauched. These stories do not rest on vague report. The historians most partial to the minister admit their truth, and censure them in terms which, though too lenient for the occasion, was too severe. These facts are alone sufficient to justify the appellation with which Pym branded him "the wicked Earl."

In spite of all Strafford's vices, in spite of all his dangerous projects, he was certainly entitled to the benefit of the law; but of the law in all its rigour; of the law according to the utmost

strictness of the letter, which killeth. He was not to be torn in pieces by a mob, or stabbed in the back by an assassin. He was not to have punishment meted out to him from his own iniquitous measure. But if justice, in the whole range of its wide armoury, contained one weapon which could pierce him, that weapon his pursuers were bound, before God and man, to employ.

“If he may
Find mercy in the law, ‘tis his: if none,
Let him not seek’t of us.”

Such was the language which the Commons might justly use. Did then the articles against Strafford strictly amount to high treason? Many people, who know neither what the articles were, nor what high treason is, will answer in the negative, simply because the accused person, speaking for his life, took that ground of defence. The journals of the Lords show that the judges were consulted. They answered, with one accord, that the articles on which the earl was convicted amounted to high treason. This judicial opinion, even if we suppose it to have been erroneous, goes far to justify the Parliament. The judgment pronounced in the Exchequer Chamber has always been urged by the apologists of Charles in defence of his conduct respecting ship-money. Yet on that occasion there was but a bare majority in favour of the party at whose pleasure all the magistrates composing the tribunal were removable. The decision in the case of Strafford was unanimous; as far as we can judge, it was

unbiassed; and, though there may be room for hesitation, we think, on the whole, that it was reasonable. "It may be remarked," says Mr. Hallam, "that the fifteenth article of the impeachment, charging Strafford with raising money by his own authority, and quartering troops on the people of Ireland, in order to compel their obedience to his unlawful requisitions, upon which, and upon one other article, not upon the whole matter, the Peers voted him guilty, does, at least, approach very nearly, if we may not say more, to a substantive treason within the statute of Edward the Third, as a levying of war against the King." This most sound and just exposition has provoked a very ridiculous reply. "It should seem to be an Irish construction this," says, an assailant of Mr. Hallam, "which makes the raising money for the King's service, with his knowledge, and by his approbation, to come under the head of levying war on the King, and therefore to be high treason." Now, people who undertake to write on points of constitutional law should know, what every attorney's clerk and every forward schoolboy on an upper form knows, that, by a fundamental maxim of our polity, the King can do no wrong; that every court is bound to suppose his conduct and his sentiments to be, on every occasion, such as they ought to be; and that no evidence can be received for the purpose of setting aside this loyal and salutary presumption. The Lords therefore, were bound to take it for granted that the King considered arms which were unlawfully directed against his people as directed against his own throne.

The remarks of Mr. Hallam on the bill of attainder, though, as usual, weighty and acute, do not perfectly satisfy us. He defends the principle, but objects to the severity of the punishment. That, on great emergencies, the State may justifiably pass a retrospective act against an offender, we have no doubt whatever. We are acquainted with only one argument on the other side, which has in it enough of reason to bear an answer. Warning, it is said, is the end of punishment. But a punishment inflicted, not by a general rule, but by an arbitrary discretion, cannot serve the purpose of a warning. It is therefore useless; and useless pain ought not to be inflicted. This sophism has found its way into several books on penal legislation. It admits however of a very simple refutation. In the first place, punishments *ex post facto* are not altogether useless even as warnings. They are warnings to a particular class which stand in great need of warnings to favourites and ministers. They remind persons of this description that there maybe a day of reckoning for those who ruin and enslave their country in all forms of the law. But this is not all. Warning is, in ordinary cases, the principal end of punishment; but it is not the only end. To remove the offender, to preserve society from those dangers which are to be apprehended from his incorrigible depravity, is often one of the ends. In the case of such a knave as Wild, or such a ruffian as Thurtell, it is a very important end. In the case of a powerful and wicked statesman, it is infinitely more important; so important, as alone to justify the utmost severity, even though it were certain that his fate would

not deter others from imitating his example. At present, indeed, we should think it extremely pernicious to take such a course, even with a worse minister than Strafford, if a worse could exist; for, at present, Parliament has only to withhold its support from a Cabinet to produce an immediate change of hands. The case was widely different in the reign of Charles the First. That Prince had governed during eleven years without any Parliament; and, even when Parliament was sitting, had supported Buckingham against its most violent remonstrances.

Mr. Hallam is of opinion that a bill of pains and penalties ought to have been passed; but he draws a distinction less just, we think, than his distinctions usually are. His opinion, so far as we can collect it, is this, that there are almost insurmountable objections to retrospective laws for capital punishment, but that, where the punishment stops short of death, the objections are comparatively trifling. Now the practice of taking the severity of the penalty into consideration, when the question is about the mode of procedure and the rules of evidence, is no doubt sufficiently common. We often see a man convicted of a simple larceny on evidence on which he would not be convicted of a burglary. It sometimes happens that a jury, when there is strong suspicion, but not absolute demonstration, that an act, unquestionably amounting to murder, was committed by the prisoner before them, will find him guilty of manslaughter. But this is surely very irrational. The rules of evidence no more depend on the magnitude of the interests at stake than the rules

of arithmetic. We might as well say that we have a greater chance of throwing a size when we are playing for a penny than when we are playing for a thousand pounds, as that a form of trial which is sufficient for the purposes of justice, in a matter affecting liberty and property, is insufficient in a matter affecting life. Nay, if a mode of proceeding be too lax for capital cases, it is, a fortiori, too lax for all others; for in capital cases, the principles of human nature will always afford considerable security. No judge is so cruel as he who indemnifies himself for scrupulosity in cases of blood, by licence in affairs of smaller importance. The difference in tale on the one side far more than makes up for the difference in weight on the other.

If there be any universal objection to retrospective punishment, there is no more to be said. But such is not the opinion of Mr. Hallam. He approves of the mode of proceeding. He thinks that a punishment, not previously affixed by law to the offences of Strafford, should have been inflicted; that Strafford should have been, by act of Parliament, degraded from his rank, and condemned to perpetual banishment. Our difficulty would have been at the first step, and there only. Indeed we can scarcely conceive that any case which does not call for capital punishment can call for punishment by a retrospective act. We can scarcely conceive a man so wicked and so dangerous that the whole course of law must be disturbed in order to reach him, yet not so wicked as to deserve the severest sentence, nor so dangerous as to require the last and surest custody, that

of the grave. If we had thought that Strafford might be safely suffered to live in France, we should have thought it better that he should continue to live in England, than that he should be exiled by a special act. As to degradation, it was not the Earl, but the general and the statesman, whom the people had to fear. Essex said, on that occasion, with more truth than elegance, "Stone dead hath no fellow." And often during the civil wars the Parliament had reason to rejoice that an irreversible law and an impassable barrier protected them from the valour and capacity of Wentworth.

It is remarkable that neither Hyde nor Falkland voted against the bill of attainder. There is, indeed, reason to believe that Falkland spoke in favour of it. In one respect, as Mr. Hallam has observed, the proceeding was honourably distinguished from others of the same kind. An act was passed to relieve the children of Strafford from the forfeiture and corruption of blood which were the legal consequences of the sentence. The Crown had never shown equal generosity in a case of treason. The liberal conduct of the Commons has been fully and most appropriately repaid. The House of Wentworth has since that time been as much distinguished by public spirit as by power and splendour, and may at the present moment boast of members with whom Say and Hampden would have been proud to act.

It is somewhat curious that the admirers of Strafford should also be, without a single exception, the admirers of Charles; for, whatever we may think of the conduct of the Parliament

towards the unhappy favourite, there can be no doubt that the treatment which he received from his master was disgraceful. Faithless alike to his people and to his tools, the King did not scruple to play the part of the cowardly approver, who hangs his accomplice. It is good that there should be such men as Charles in every league of villainy. It is for such men that the offer of pardon and reward which appears after a murder is intended. They are indemnified, remunerated and despised. The very magistrate who avails himself of their assistance looks on them as more contemptible than the criminal whom they betray. Was Strafford innocent? Was he a meritorious servant of the Crown? If so, what shall we think of the Prince, who having solemnly promised him that not a hair of his head should be hurt, and possessing an unquestioned constitutional right to save him, gave him up to the vengeance of his enemies? There were some points which we know that Charles would not concede, and for which he was willing to risk the chances of the civil war. Ought not a King, who will make a stand for anything, to make a stand for the innocent blood? Was Strafford guilty? Even on this supposition, it is difficult not to feel disdain for the partner of his guilt, the tempter turned punisher. If, indeed, from that time forth, the conduct of Charles had been blameless, it might have been said that his eyes were at last opened to the errors of his former conduct, and that, in sacrificing to the wishes of his Parliament a minister whose crime had been a devotion too zealous to the interests of his prerogative, he gave a painful and

deeply humiliating proof of the sincerity of his repentance. We may describe the King's behaviour on this occasion in terms resembling those which Hume has employed when speaking of the conduct of Churchill at the Revolution. It required ever after the most rigid justice and sincerity in the dealings of Charles with his people to vindicate his conduct towards his friend. His subsequent dealings with his people, however, clearly showed, that it was not from any respect for the Constitution, or from any sense of the deep criminality of the plans in which Strafford and himself had been engaged, that he gave up his minister to the axe. It became evident that he had abandoned a servant who, deeply guilty as to all others, was guiltless to him alone, solely in order to gain time for maturing other schemes of tyranny, and purchasing the aid of the other Wentworths. He, who would not avail himself of the power which the laws gave him to save an adherent to whom his honour was pledged, soon showed that he did not scruple to break every law and forfeit every pledge, in order to work the ruin of his opponents.

“Put not your trust in princes!” was the expression of the fallen minister, when he heard that Charles had consented to his death. The whole history of the times is a sermon on that bitter text. The defence of the Long Parliament is comprised in the dying words of its victim.

The early measures of that Parliament Mr. Hallam in general approves. But he considers the proceedings which took place after the recess in the summer of 1641 as mischievous and

violent. He thinks that, from that time, the demands of the Houses were not warranted by any imminent danger to the Constitution and that in the war which ensued they were clearly the aggressors. As this is one of the most interesting questions in our history, we will venture to state, at some length, the reasons which have led us to form an opinion on it contrary to that of a writer whose judgment we so highly respect.

We will premise that we think worse of King Charles the First than even Mr. Hallam appears to do. The fixed hatred of liberty which was the principle of the King's public conduct the unscrupulousness with which he adopted any means which might enable him to attain his ends, the readiness with which he gave promises, the impudence with which he broke them, the cruel indifference with which he threw away his useless or damaged tools, made him, at least till his character was fully exposed, and his power shaken to its foundations, a more dangerous enemy to the Constitution than a man of far greater talents and resolution might have been. Such princes may still be seen, the scandals of the southern thrones of Europe, princes false alike to the accomplices who have served them and to the opponents who have spared them, princes who, in the hour of danger, concede everything, swear everything, hold out their cheeks to every smiter, give up to punishment every instrument of their tyranny, and await with meek and smiling implacability the blessed day of perjury and revenge.

We will pass by the instances of oppression and falsehood

which disgraced the early part of the reign of Charles. We will leave out of the question the whole history of his third Parliament, the price which he exacted for assenting to the Petition of Right, the perfidy with which he violated his engagements, the death of Eliot, the barbarous punishments inflicted by the Star-Chamber, the ship-money, and all the measures now universally condemned, which disgraced his administration from 1630 to 1640. We will admit that it might be the duty of the Parliament after punishing the most guilty of his creatures, after abolishing the inquisitorial tribunals which had been the instruments of his tyranny, after reversing the unjust sentences of his victims to pause in its course. The concessions which had been made were great, the evil of civil war obvious, the advantages even of victory doubtful. The former errors of the King might be imputed to youth, to the pressure of circumstances, to the influence of evil counsel, to the undefined state of the law. We firmly believe that if, even at this eleventh hour, Charles had acted fairly towards his people, if he had even acted fairly towards his own partisans, the House of Commons would have given him a fair chance of retrieving the public confidence. Such was the opinion of Clarendon. He distinctly states that the fury of opposition had abated, that a reaction had begun to take place, that the majority of those who had taken part against the King were desirous of an honourable and complete reconciliation and that the more violent or, as it soon appeared, the more judicious members of the popular party were

fast declining in credit. The Remonstrance had been carried with great difficulty. The uncompromising antagonists of the court such as Cromwell, had begun to talk of selling their estates and leaving England. The event soon showed that they were the only men who really understood how much inhumanity and fraud lay hid under the constitutional language and gracious demeanour of the King.

The attempt to seize the five members was undoubtedly the real cause of the war. From that moment, the loyal confidence with which most of the popular party were beginning to regard the King was turned into hatred and incurable suspicion. From that moment, the Parliament was compelled to surround itself with defensive arms. From that moment, the city assumed the appearance of a garrison. From that moment, in the phrase of Clarendon, the carriage of Hampden became fiercer, that he drew the sword and threw away the scabbard. For, from that moment, it must have been evident to every impartial observer, that, in the midst of professions, oaths, and smiles, the tyrant was constantly looking forward to an absolute sway, and to a bloody revenge.

The advocates of Charles have very dexterously contrived to conceal from their readers the real nature of this transaction. By making concessions apparently candid and ample, they elude the great accusation. They allow that the measure was weak and even frantic, an absurd caprice of Lord Digby, absurdly adopted by the King. And thus they save their client from the full penalty of his

transgression, by entering a plea of guilty to the minor offence. To us his conduct appears at this day as at the time it appeared to the Parliament and the city. We think it by no means so foolish as it pleases his friends to represent it, and far more wicked.

In the first place, the transaction was illegal from beginning to end. The impeachment was illegal. The process was illegal. The service was illegal. If Charles wished to prosecute the five members for treason, a bill against them should have been sent to a grand jury. That a commoner cannot be tried for high treason by the Lords at the suit of the Crown, is part of the very alphabet of our law. That no man can be arrested by the King in person is equally clear. This was an established maxim of our jurisprudence even in the time of Edward the Fourth. "A subject," said Chief Justice Markham to that Prince, "may arrest for treason: the King cannot; for, if the arrest be illegal, the party has no remedy against the King."

The time at which Charles took his step also deserves consideration. We have already said that the ardour which the Parliament had displayed at the time of its first meeting had considerably abated, that the leading opponents of the court were desponding, and that their followers were in general inclined to milder and more temperate measures than those which had hitherto been pursued. In every country, and in none more than in England, there is a disposition to take the part of those who are unmercifully run down, and who seem destitute of all means of defence. Every man who has observed the ebb and flow

of public feeling in our own time will easily recall examples to illustrate this remark. An English statesman ought to pay assiduous worship to Nemesis, to be most apprehensive of ruin when he is at the height of power and popularity, and to dread his enemy most when most completely prostrated. The fate of the Coalition Ministry in 1784 is perhaps the strongest instance in our history of the operation of this principle. A few weeks turned the ablest and most extended Ministry that ever existed into a feeble Opposition, and raised a King who was talking of retiring to Hanover to a height of power which none of his predecessors had enjoyed since the Revolution. A crisis of this description was evidently approaching in 1642. At such a crisis, a Prince of a really honest and generous nature, who had erred, who had seen his error, who had regretted the lost affections of his people, who rejoiced in the dawning hope of regaining them, would be peculiarly careful to take no step which could give occasion of offence, even to the unreasonable. On the other hand, a tyrant, whose whole life was a lie, who hated the Constitution the more because he had been compelled to feign respect for it, and to whom his own honour and the love of his people were as nothing, would select such a crisis for some appalling violation of the law, for some stroke which might remove the chiefs of an Opposition, and intimidate the herd. This Charles attempted. He missed his blow; but so narrowly, that it would have been mere madness in those at whom it was aimed to trust him again.

It deserves to be remarked that the King had, a short time

before, promised the most respectable Royalists in the House of Commons, Falkland, Colepepper, and Hyde, that he would take no measure in which that House was concerned, without consulting them. On this occasion he did not consult them. His conduct astonished them more than any other members of the Assembly. Clarendon says that they were deeply hurt by this want of confidence, and the more hurt, because, if they had been consulted, they would have done their utmost to dissuade Charles from so improper a proceeding. Did it never occur to Clarendon, will it not at least occur to men less partial, that there was good reason for this? When the danger to the throne seemed imminent, the King was ready to put himself for a time into the hands of those who, though they disapproved of his past conduct, thought that the remedies had now become worse than the distempers. But we believe that in his heart he regarded both the parties in the Parliament with feelings of aversion which differed only in the degree of their intensity, and that the awful warning which he proposed to give, by immolating the principal supporters of the Remonstrance, was partly intended for the instruction of those who had concurred in censuring the ship-money and in abolishing the Star-Chamber.

The Commons informed the King that their members should be forthcoming to answer any charge legally brought against them. The Lords refused to assume the unconstitutional office with which he attempted to invest them. And what was then his conduct? He went, attended by hundreds of armed men, to

seize the objects of his hatred in the House itself. The party opposed to him more than insinuated that his purpose was of the most atrocious kind. We will not condemn him merely on their suspicions. We will not hold him answerable for the sanguinary expressions of the loose brawlers who composed his train. We will judge of his act by itself alone. And we say, without hesitation, that it is impossible to acquit him of having meditated violence, and violence which might probably end in blood. He knew that the legality of his proceedings was denied. He must have known that some of the accused members were men not likely to submit peaceably to an illegal arrest. There was every reason to expect that he would find them in their places, that they would refuse to obey his summons, and that the House would support them in their refusal. What course would then have been left to him? Unless we suppose that he went on this expedition for the sole purpose of making himself ridiculous, we must believe that he would have had recourse to force. There would have been a scuffle; and it might not, under such circumstances, have been in his power, even if it had been in his inclination, to prevent a scuffle from ending in a massacre. Fortunately for his fame, unfortunately perhaps for what he prized far more, the interests of his hatred and his ambition, the affair ended differently. The birds, as he said, were flown, and his plan was disconcerted. Posterity is not extreme to mark abortive crimes; and thus the King's advocates have found it easy to represent a step, which, but for a trivial accident, might have filled England with mourning

and dismay, as a mere error of judgment, wild and foolish, but perfectly innocent. Such was not, however, at the time, the opinion of any party. The most zealous Royalists were so much disgusted and ashamed that they suspended their opposition to the popular party, and, silently at least, concurred in measures of precaution so strong as almost to amount to resistance.

From that day, whatever of confidence and loyal attachment had survived the misrule of seventeen years was, in the great body of the people, extinguished, and extinguished for ever. As soon as the outrage had failed, the hypocrisy recommenced. Down to the very eve of this flagitious attempt Charles had been talking of his respect for the privileges of Parliament and the liberties of his people. He began again in the same style on the morrow; but it was too late. To trust him now would have been, not moderation, but insanity. What common security would suffice against a Prince who was evidently watching his season with that cold and patient hatred which, in the long-run, tires out every other passion?

It is certainly from no admiration of Charles that Mr. Hallam disapproves of the conduct of the Houses in resorting to arms. But he thinks that any attempt on the part of that Prince to establish a despotism would have been as strongly opposed by his adherents as by his enemies, and that therefore the Constitution might be considered as out of danger, or, at least that it had more to apprehend from the war than from the King. On this subject Mr. Hallam dilates at length, and with conspicuous ability. We

will offer a few considerations which lead us to incline to a different opinion.

The Constitution of England was only one of a large family. In all the monarchies of Western Europe, during the middle ages, there existed restraints on the royal authority, fundamental laws, and representative assemblies. In the fifteenth century, the government of Castile seems to have been as free as that of our own country. That of Arragon was beyond all question more so. In France, the sovereign was more absolute. Yet even in France, the States-General alone could constitutionally impose taxes; and, at the very time when the authority of those assemblies was beginning to languish, the Parliament of Paris received such an accession of strength as enabled it, in some measure, to perform the functions of a legislative assembly. Sweden and Denmark had constitutions of a similar description.

Let us overleap two or three hundred years, and contemplate Europe at the commencement of the eighteenth century. Every free constitution, save one, had gone down. That of England had weathered the danger, and was riding in full security. In Denmark and Sweden, the kings had availed themselves of the disputes which raged between the nobles and the commons, to unite all the powers of government in their own hands. In France the institution of the States was only mentioned by lawyers as a part of the ancient theory of their government. It slept a deep sleep, destined to be broken by a tremendous waking. No person remembered the sittings of the three orders,

or expected ever to see them renewed. Louis the Fourteenth had imposed on his parliament a patient silence of sixty years. His grandson, after the War of the Spanish Succession, assimilated the constitution of Arragon to that of Castile, and extinguished the last feeble remains of liberty in the Peninsula. In England, on the other hand, the Parliament was infinitely more powerful than it had ever been. Not only was its legislative authority fully established; but its right to interfere, by advice almost equivalent to command, in every department of the executive government, was recognised. The appointment of ministers, the relations with foreign powers, the conduct of a war or a negotiation, depended less on the pleasure of the Prince than on that of the two Houses.

What then made us to differ? Why was it that, in that epidemic malady of constitutions, ours escaped the destroying influence; or rather that, at the very crisis of the disease, a favourable turn took place in England, and in England alone? It was not surely without a cause that so many kindred systems of government, having flourished together so long, languished and expired at almost the same time.

It is the fashion to say that the progress of civilisation is favourable to liberty. The maxim, though in some sense true, must be limited by many qualifications and exceptions. Wherever a poor and rude nation, in which the form of government is a limited monarchy, receives a great accession of wealth and knowledge, it is in imminent danger of falling under arbitrary power.

In such a state of society as that which existed all over Europe during the middle ages, very slight checks sufficed to keep the sovereign in order. His means of corruption and intimidation were very scanty. He had little money, little patronage, no military establishment. His armies resembled juries. They were drawn out of the mass of the people: they soon returned to it again: and the character which was habitual prevailed over that which was occasional. A campaign of forty days was too short, the discipline of a national militia too lax, to efface from their minds the feelings of civil life. As they carried to the camp the sentiments and interests of the farm and the shop, so they carried back to the farm and the shop the military accomplishments which they had acquired in the camp. At home the soldier learned how to value his rights, abroad how to defend them.

Such a military force as this was a far stronger restraint on the regal power than any legislative assembly. The army, now the most formidable instrument of the executive power, was then the most formidable check on that power. Resistance to an established government, in modern times so difficult and perilous an enterprise, was in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the simplest and easiest matter in the world. Indeed, it was far too simple and easy. An insurrection was got up then almost as easily as a petition is got up now. In a popular cause, or even in an unpopular cause favoured by a few great nobles, a force of ten thousand armed men was raised in a week. If the King were, like our Edward the Second and Richard the Second, generally

odious, he could not procure a single bow or halbert. He fell at once and without an effort. In such times a sovereign like Louis the Fifteenth or the Emperor Paul would have been pulled down before his misgovernment had lasted for a month. We find that all the fame and influence of our Edward the Third could not save his Madame de Pompadour from the effects of the public hatred.

Hume and many other writers have hastily concluded, that, in the fifteenth century, the English Parliament was altogether servile, because it recognised, without opposition, every successful usurper. That it was not servile its conduct on many occasions of inferior importance is sufficient to prove. But surely it was not strange that the majority of the nobles, and of the deputies chosen by the commons, should approve of revolutions which the nobles and commons had effected. The Parliament did not blindly follow the event of war, but participated in those changes of public sentiment on which the event of war depended. The legal check was secondary and auxiliary to that which the nation held in its own hands.

There have always been monarchies in Asia, in which the royal authority has been tempered by fundamental laws, though no legislative body exists to watch over them. The guarantee is the opinion of a community of which every individual is a soldier. Thus, the king of Cabul, as Mr. Elphinstone informs us, cannot augment the land revenue, or interfere with the jurisdiction of the ordinary tribunals.

In the European kingdoms of this description there were representative assemblies. But it was not necessary that those assemblies should meet very frequently, that they should interfere with all the operations of the executive government, that they should watch with jealousy, and resent with prompt indignation, every violation of the laws which the sovereign might commit. They were so strong that they might safely be careless. He was so feeble that he might safely be suffered to encroach. If he ventured too far, chastisement and ruin were at hand. In fact, the people generally suffered more from his weakness than from his authority. The tyranny of wealthy and powerful subjects was the characteristic evil of the times. The royal prerogatives were not even sufficient for the defence of property and the maintenance of police.

The progress of civilisation introduced a great change. War became a science, and, as a necessary consequence, a trade. The great body of the people grew every day more reluctant to undergo the inconveniences of military service, and better able to pay others for undergoing them. A new class of men, therefore, dependent on the Crown alone, natural enemies of those popular rights which are to them as the dew to the fleece of Gideon, slaves among freemen, freemen among slaves, grew into importance. That physical force which in the dark ages had belonged to the nobles and the commons, and had, far more than any charter, or any assembly, been the safeguard of their privileges, was transferred entire to the King. Monarchy gained in two ways.

The sovereign was strengthened, the subjects weakened. The great mass of the population, destitute of all military discipline and organisation, ceased to exercise any influence by force on political transactions. There have, indeed, during the last hundred and fifty years, been many popular insurrections in Europe: but all have failed except those in which the regular army has been induced to join the disaffected.

Those legal checks which, while the sovereign remained dependent on his subjects, had been adequate to the purpose for which they were designed, were now found wanting. The dikes which had been sufficient while the waters were low were not high enough to keep out the springtide. The deluge passed over them and, according to the exquisite illustration of Butler, the formal boundaries, which had excluded it, now held it in. The old constitutions fared like the old shields and coats of mail. They were the defences of a rude age; and they did well enough against the weapons of a rude age. But new and more formidable means of destruction were invented. The ancient panoply became useless; and it was thrown aside, to rust in lumber-rooms, or exhibited only as part of an idle pageant.

Thus absolute monarchy was established on the Continent. England escaped; but she escaped very narrowly. Happily our insular situation, and the pacific policy of James, rendered standing armies unnecessary here, till they had been for some time kept up in the neighbouring kingdoms. Our public men, had therefore an opportunity of watching the effects produced by this

momentous change on governments which bore a close analogy to that established in England. Everywhere they saw the power of the monarch increasing, the resistance of assemblies which were no longer supported by a national force gradually becoming more and more feeble, and at length altogether ceasing. The friends and the enemies of liberty perceived with equal clearness the causes of this general decay. It is the favourite theme of Strafford. He advises the King to procure from the judges a recognition of his right to raise an army at his pleasure. "This place well fortified," says he, "for ever vindicates the monarchy at home from under the conditions and restraints of subjects." We firmly believe that he was in the right. Nay; we believe that, even if no deliberate scheme, of arbitrary government had been formed, by the sovereign and his ministers, there was great reason to apprehend a natural extinction of the Constitution. If, for example, Charles had played the part of Gustavus Adolphus, if he had carried on a popular war for the defence of the Protestant cause in Germany, if he had gratified the national pride by a series of victories, if he had formed an army of forty or fifty thousand devoted soldiers, we do not see what chance the nation would have had of escaping from despotism. The judges would have given as strong a decision in favour of camp-money as they gave in favour of ship-money. If they had been scrupulous, it would have made little difference. An individual who resisted would have been treated as Charles treated Eliot, and as Strafford wished to treat Hampden. The Parliament might have been

summoned once in twenty years, to congratulate a King on his accession, or to give solemnity to some great measure of state. Such had been the fate of legislative assemblies as powerful, as much respected, as high-spirited, as the English Lords and Commons.

The two Houses, surrounded by the ruins of so many free constitutions overthrown or sapped by the new military system, were required to intrust the command of an army and the conduct of the Irish war to a King who had proposed to himself the destruction of liberty as the great end of his policy. We are decidedly of opinion that it would have been fatal to comply. Many of those who took the side of the King on this question would have cursed their own loyalty, if they had seen him return from war; at the head of twenty thousand troops, accustomed to carriage and free quarters in Ireland.

We think with Mr. Hallam that many of the Royalist nobility and gentry were true friends to the Constitution, and that, but for the solemn protestations by which the King bound himself to govern according to the law for the future, they never would have joined his standard. But surely they underrated the public danger. Falkland is commonly selected as the most respectable specimen of this class. He was indeed a man of great talents and of great virtues but, we apprehend, infinitely too fastidious for public life. He did not perceive that, in such times as those on which his lot had fallen, the duty of a statesman is to choose the better cause and to stand by it, in spite of those excesses

by which every cause, however good in itself, will be disgraced. The present evil always seemed to him the worst. He was always going backward and forward; but it should be remembered to his honour that it was always from the stronger to the weaker side that he deserted. While Charles was oppressing the people, Falkland was a resolute champion of liberty. He attacked Strafford. He even concurred in strong measures against Episcopacy. But the violence of his party annoyed him, and drove him to the other party, to be equally annoyed there. Dreading the success of the cause which he had espoused, disgusted by the courtiers of Oxford, as he had been disgusted by the patriots of Westminster, yet bound by honour not to abandon the cause, for which he was in arms, he pined away, neglected his person, went about moaning for peace, and at last rushed desperately on death, as the best refuge in such miserable times. If he had lived through the scenes that followed, we have little doubt that he would have condemned himself to share the exile and beggary of the royal family; that he would then have returned to oppose all their measures; that he would have been sent to the Tower by the Commons as a stifler of the Popish Plot, and by the King as an accomplice in the Rye-House Plot; and that, if he had escaped being hanged, first by Scroggs, and then by Jeffreys, he would, after manfully opposing James the Second through years of tyranny, have been seized with a fit of compassion, at the very moment of the Revolution, have voted for a regency, and died a non-juror.

We do not dispute that the royal party contained many excellent men and excellent citizens. But this we say, that they did not discern those times. The peculiar glory of the Houses of Parliament is that, in the great plague and mortality of constitutions, they took their stand between the living and the dead. At the very crisis of our destiny, at the very moment when the fate which had passed on every other nation was about to pass on England, they arrested the danger.

Those who conceive that the parliamentary leaders were desirous merely to maintain the old constitution, and those who represent them as conspiring to subvert it, are equally in error. The old constitution, as we have attempted to show, could not be maintained. The progress of time, the increase of wealth, the diffusion of knowledge, the great change in the European system of war, rendered it impossible that any of the monarchies of the middle ages should continue to exist on the old footing. The prerogative of the crown was constantly advancing. If the privileges of the people were to remain absolutely stationary, they would relatively retrograde. The monarchical and democratical parts of the government were placed in a situation not unlike that of the two brothers in the Fairy Queen, one of whom saw the soil of his inheritance daily, washed away by the tide and joined to that of his rival. The portions had at first been fairly meted out. By a natural and constant transfer, the one had been extended; the other had dwindled to nothing. A new partition, or a compensation, was necessary to restore the original

equality.

It was now, therefore, absolutely necessary to violate the formal part of the constitution, in order to preserve its spirit. This might have been done, as it was done at the Revolution, by expelling the reigning family, and calling to the throne princes who, relying solely on an elective title, would find it necessary to respect the privileges and follow the advice of the assemblies to which they owed everything, to pass every bill which the Legislature strongly pressed upon them, and to fill the offices of state with men in whom the Legislature confided. But, as the two Houses did not choose to change the dynasty, it was necessary that they should do directly what at the Revolution was done indirectly. Nothing is more usual than to hear it said that, if the Houses had contented themselves with making such a reform in the government under Charles as was afterwards made under William, they would have had the highest claim to national gratitude; and that in their violence they overshot the mark. But how was it possible to make such a settlement under Charles? Charles was not, like William and the princes of the Hanoverian line, bound by community of interests and dangers to the Parliament. It was therefore necessary that he should be bound by treaty and statute.

Mr. Hallam reprobates, in language which has a little surprised us, the nineteen propositions into which the Parliament digested its scheme. Is it possible to doubt that, if James the Second had remained in the island, and had been suffered, as

he probably would in that case have been suffered, to keep his crown, conditions to the full as hard would have been imposed on him? On the other hand, we fully admit that, if the Long Parliament had pronounced the departure of Charles from London an abdication, and had called Essex or Northumberland to the throne, the new prince might have safely been suffered to reign without such restrictions. His situation would have been a sufficient guarantee.

In the nineteen propositions we see very little to blame except the articles against the Catholics. These, however, were in the spirit of that age; and to some sturdy churchmen in our own, they may seem to palliate even the good which the Long Parliament effected. The regulation with respect to new creations of Peers is the only other article about which we entertain any doubt. One of the propositions is that the judges shall hold their offices during good behaviour. To this surely no exception will be taken. The right of directing the education and marriage of the princes was most properly claimed by the Parliament, on the same ground on which, after the Revolution, it was enacted, that no king, on pain of forfeiting, his throne, should espouse a Papist. Unless we condemn the statesmen of the Revolution, who conceived that England could not safely be governed by a sovereign married to a Catholic queen, we can scarcely condemn the Long Parliament because, having a sovereign so situated, they thought it necessary to place him under strict restraints. The influence of Henrietta Maria had already been deeply felt in political affairs. In the

regulation of her family, in the education and marriage of her children, it was still more likely to be felt; There might be another Catholic queen; possibly a Catholic king. Little, as we are disposed to join in the vulgar clamour on this subject, we think that such an event ought to be, if possible, averted; and this could only be done, if Charles was to be left on the throne, by placing his domestic arrangements under the control of Parliament.

A veto on the appointment of ministers was demanded. But this veto Parliament has virtually possessed ever since the Revolution. It is no doubt very far better that this power of the Legislature should be exercised as it is now exercised, when any great occasion calls for interference, than that at every change the Commons should have to signify their approbation or disapprobation in form. But, unless a new family had been placed on the throne, we do not see how this power could have been exercised as it is now exercised. We again repeat that no restraints which could be imposed on the princes who reigned after the Revolution could have added to the security, which their title afforded. They were compelled to court their parliaments. But from Charles nothing was to be expected which was not set down in the bond.

It was not stipulated that the King should give up his negative on acts of Parliament. But the Commons, had certainly shown a strong disposition to exact this security also. "Such a doctrine," says Mr. Hallam, "was in this country as repugnant to the whole history of our laws, as it was incompatible with the subsistence

of the monarchy in anything more than a nominal preeminence.” Now this article has been as completely carried into effect by the Revolution as if it had been formally inserted in the Bill of Rights and the Act of Settlement. We are surprised, we confess, that Mr. Hallam should attach so much importance to a prerogative which has not been exercised for a hundred and thirty years, which probably will never be exercised again, and which can scarcely, in any conceivable case, be exercised for a salutary purpose.

But the great security, the security without which every other would have been insufficient, was the power of the sword. This both parties thoroughly understood. The Parliament insisted on having the command of the militia and the direction of the Irish war. “By God, not for an hour!” exclaimed the King. “Keep the militia,” said the Queen, after the defeat of the royal party. “Keep the militia; that will bring back everything.” That, by the old constitution, no military authority was lodged in the Parliament, Mr. Hallam has clearly shown. That it is a species of authority which ought, not to be permanently lodged in large and divided assemblies, must, we think in fairness be conceded. Opposition, publicity, long discussion, frequent compromise; these are the characteristics of the proceedings of such assemblies. Unity, secrecy, decision, are the qualities which military arrangements require. There were, therefore, serious objections to the proposition of the Houses on this subject. But, on the other hand, to trust such a King, at such a crisis, with the very weapon which, in hands less dangerous, had destroyed

so many free constitutions, would have been the extreme of rashness. The jealousy with which the oligarchy of Venice and the States of Holland regarded their generals and armies induced them perpetually to interfere in matters of which they were incompetent to judge. This policy secured them against military usurpation, but placed them, under great disadvantages in war. The uncontrolled power which the King of France exercised over his troops enabled him to conquer his enemies, but enabled him also to oppress his people. Was there any intermediate course? None, we confess altogether free from objection. But on the whole, we conceive that the best measure would have been that which the Parliament over and over proposed, namely, that for a limited time the power of the sword should be left to the two Houses, and that it should revert to the Crown when the constitution should be firmly established, and when the new securities of freedom should be so far strengthened by prescription that it would be difficult to employ even a standing army for the purpose of subverting them.

Mr. Hallam thinks that the dispute might easily have been compromised, by enacting that, the King should have no power to keep a standing army on foot without the consent of Parliament. He reasons as if the question had been merely theoretical, and as if at that time no army had been wanted. "The kingdom," he says, "might have well dispensed, in that age, with any military organisation." Now, we think that Mr. Hallam overlooks the most important circumstance in the whole case. Ireland was actually in

rebellion; and a great expedition would obviously be necessary to reduce that kingdom to obedience. The Houses had therefore to consider, not at abstract question of law, but an urgent practical question, directly involving the safety of the state. They had to consider the expediency of immediately giving a great army to a King who was, at least, as desirous to put down the Parliament of England as to conquer the insurgents of Ireland.

Of course we do not mean to defend all the measures of the Houses. Far from it. There never was a perfect man. It would, therefore, be the height of absurdity to expect a perfect party or a perfect assembly. For large bodies are far more likely to err than individuals. The passions are inflamed by sympathy; the fear of punishment and the sense of shame are diminished by partition. Every day we see men do for their faction what they would die rather than do for themselves.

Scarcely any private quarrel ever happens, in which the right and wrong are so exquisitely divided that all the right lies on one side, and all the wrong on the other. But here was a schism which separated a great nation into two parties. Of these parties, each was composed of many smaller parties. Each contained many members, who differed far less from their moderate opponents than from their violent allies. Each reckoned among its supporters many who were determined in their choice by some accident of birth, of connection, or of local situation. Each of them attracted to itself in multitudes those fierce and turbid spirits, to whom the clouds and whirlwinds of the political

hurricane are the atmosphere of life. A party, like a camp, has its sutlers and camp-followers, as well as its soldiers. In its progress it collects round it a vast retinue, composed of people who thrive by its custom or are amused by its display, who may be sometimes reckoned, in an ostentatious enumeration, as forming a part of it, but who give no aid to its operations, and take but a languid interest in its success, who relax its discipline and dishonour its flag by their irregularities, and who, after a disaster, are perfectly ready to cut the throats and rifle the baggage of their companions.

Thus it is in every great division; and thus it was in our civil war. On both sides there was, undoubtedly, enough of crime and enough of error to disgust any man who did not reflect that the whole history of the species is made up of little except crimes and errors. Misanthropy is not the temper which qualifies a man to act in great affairs, or to judge of them.

“Of the Parliament,” says Mr. Hallam, “it may be said I think, with not greater severity than truth, that scarce two or three public acts of justice, humanity, or generosity, and very few of political wisdom or courage, are recorded of them, from their quarrel with the King, to their expulsion by Cromwell.” Those who may agree with us in the opinion which we have expressed as to the original demands of the Parliament will scarcely concur in this strong censure. The propositions which the Houses made at Oxford, at Uxbridge, and at Newcastle, were in strict accordance with these demands. In the darkest period of the war, they

showed no disposition to concede any vital principle. In the fulness of their success, they showed no disposition to encroach beyond these limits. In this respect we cannot but think that they showed justice and generosity, as well as political wisdom and courage.

The Parliament was certainly far from faultless. We fully agree with Mr. Hallam in reprobating their treatment of Laud. For the individual, indeed, we entertain a more unmitigated contempt than, for any other character in our history. The fondness with which a portion of the church regards his memory, can be compared only to that perversity of affection which sometimes leads a mother to select the monster or the idiot of the family as the object of her especial favour, Mr. Hallam has incidentally observed, that, in the correspondence of Laud with Strafford, there are no indications of a sense of duty towards God or man. The admirers of the Archbishop have, in consequence, inflicted upon the public a crowd of extracts designed to prove the contrary. Now, in all those passages, we see nothing, which a prelate as wicked as Pope Alexander or Cardinal Dubois might not have written. Those passages indicate no sense of duty to God or man, but simply a strong interest in the prosperity and dignity of the order to which the writer belonged; an interest which, when kept within certain limits, does not deserve censure, but which can never be considered as a virtue. Laud is anxious to accommodate satisfactorily the disputes in the University of Dublin. He regrets to hear that a church is used as a stable,

and that the benefices of Ireland are very poor. He is desirous that, however small a congregation may be, service should be regularly performed. He expresses a wish that the judges of the court before which questions of tithes are generally brought should be selected with a view to the interest of the clergy. All this may be very proper; and it may be very proper that an alderman should stand up for the tolls of his borough, and an East India director for the charter of his Company. But it is ridiculous to say that these things indicate piety and benevolence. No primate, though he were the most abandoned of mankind, could wish to see the body, with the influence of which his own influence was identical, degraded in the public estimation by internal dissensions, by the ruinous state of its edifices, and by the slovenly performance of its rites. We willingly acknowledge that the particular letters in question have very little harm in them; a compliment which cannot often be paid either to the writings or to the actions of Laud.

Bad as the Archbishop was, however, he was not a traitor within the statute. Nor was he by any means so formidable as to be a proper subject for a retrospective ordinance of the legislature. His mind had not expansion enough to comprehend a great scheme, good or bad. His oppressive acts were not, like those of the Earl of Strafford, parts of an extensive system. They were the luxuries in which a mean and irritable disposition indulges itself from day to day, the excesses natural to a little mind in a great place. The severest punishment which the two

Houses could have inflicted on him would have been to set him at liberty and send him to Oxford. There he might have stayed, tortured by his own diabolical temper, hungering for Puritans to pillory and mangle, plaguing the Cavaliers, for want of somebody else to plague with his peevishness and absurdity, performing grimaces and antics in the cathedral, continuing that incomparable diary, which we never see without forgetting the vices of his heart. In the imbecility of his intellect minuting down his dreams, counting the drops of blood which fell from his nose, watching the direction of the salt, and listening for the note of the screech-owls. Contemptuous mercy was the only vengeance which it became the Parliament to take on such a ridiculous old bigot.

The Houses, it must be acknowledged, committed great errors in the conduct of the war, or rather one great error, which brought their affairs into a condition requiring the most perilous expedients. The parliamentary leaders of what may be called the first generation, Essex, Manchester, Northumberland, Hollis, even Pym, all the most eminent men in short, Hampden excepted, were inclined to half measures. They dreaded a decisive victory almost as much as a decisive overthrow. They wished to bring the King into a situation which might render it necessary for him to grant their just and wise demands, but not to subvert the constitution or to change the dynasty. They were afraid of serving the purposes of those fierce and determined enemies of monarchy, who now began to show themselves in the

lower ranks of the party. The war was, therefore, conducted in a languid and inefficient manner. A resolute leader might have brought it to a close in a month. At the end of three campaigns, however, the event was still dubious; and that it had not been decidedly unfavourable to the cause of liberty was principally owing to the skill and energy which the more violent roundheads had displayed in subordinate situations. The conduct of Fairfax and Cromwell at Marston had, exhibited a remarkable contrast to that of Essex at Edgehill, and to that of Waller at Lansdowne.

If there be any truth established by the universal experience of nations, it is this; that to carry the spirit of peace into war is weak and cruel policy. The time for negotiation is the time for deliberation and delay. But when an extreme case calls for that remedy which is in its own nature most violent, and which, in such cases, is a remedy only because it is violent, it is idle to think of mitigating and diluting. Languid war can do nothing which negotiation or submission will not do better: and to act on any other principle is, not to save blood and money, but to squander them.

This the parliamentary leaders found. The third year of hostilities was drawing to a close; and they had not conquered the King. They had not obtained even those advantages which they had expected from a policy obviously erroneous in a military point of view. They had wished to husband their resources. They now found that in enterprises like theirs, parsimony is the worst profusion. They had hoped to effect a reconciliation.

The event taught them that the best way to conciliate is to bring the work of destruction to a speedy termination. By their moderation many lives and much property had been wasted. The angry passions which, if the contest had been short, would have died away almost as soon as they appeared, had fixed themselves in the form of deep and lasting hatred. A military caste had grown up. Those who had been induced to take up arms by the patriotic feelings of citizens had begun to entertain the professional feelings of soldiers. Above all, the leaders of the party had forfeited its confidence, If they had, by their valour and abilities, gained a complete victory, their influence might have been sufficient to prevent their associates from abusing it. It was now necessary to choose more resolute and uncompromising commanders. Unhappily the illustrious man who alone united in himself all the talents and virtues which the crisis required, who alone could have saved his country from the present dangers without plunging her into others, who alone could have united all the friends of liberty in obedience to his commanding genius and his venerable name, was no more. Something might still be done. The Houses might still avert that worst of all evils, the triumphant return of an imperious and unprincipled master. They might still preserve London from all the horrors of rapine, massacre, and lust. But their hopes of a victory as spotless as their cause, of a reconciliation which might knit together the hearts of all honest Englishmen for the defence of the public good, of durable tranquillity, of temperate freedom, were buried in the

grave of Hampden.

The self-denying ordinance was passed, and the army was remodelled. These measures were undoubtedly full of danger. But all that was left to the Parliament was to take the less of two dangers. And we think that, even if they could have accurately foreseen all that followed, their decision ought to have been the same. Under any circumstances, we should have preferred Cromwell to Charles. But there could be no comparison between Cromwell and Charles victorious, Charles restored, Charles enabled to feed fat all the hungry grudges of his smiling rancour and his cringing pride. The next visit of his Majesty to his faithful Commons would have been more serious than that with which he last honoured them; more serious than that which their own General paid them some years after. The King would scarce have been content with praying that the Lord would deliver him from Vane, or with pulling Marten by the cloak. If, by fatal mismanagement, nothing was left to England but a choice of tyrants, the last tyrant whom she should have chosen was Charles.

From the apprehension of this worst evil the Houses were soon delivered by their new leaders. The armies of Charles were everywhere routed, his fastnesses stormed, his party humbled and subjugated. The King himself fell into the hands of the Parliament; and both the King and the Parliament soon fell into the hands of the army. The fate of both the captives was the same. Both were treated alternately with respect and with insult. At length the natural life of one, and the political life of the other,

were terminated by violence; and the power for which both had struggled was united in a single hand. Men naturally sympathise with the calamities of individuals; but they are inclined to look on a fallen party with contempt rather than with pity. Thus misfortune turned the greatest of Parliaments into the despised Rump, and the worst of Kings into the Blessed Martyr.

Mr. Hallam decidedly condemns the execution of Charles; and in all that he says on that subject we heartily agree. We fully concur with him in thinking that a great social schism, such as the civil war, is not to be confounded with an ordinary treason, and that the vanquished ought to be treated according to the rules, not of municipal, but of international law. In this case the distinction is of the less importance, because both international and municipal law were in favour of Charles. He was a prisoner of war by the former, a King by the latter. By neither was he a traitor. If he had been successful, and had put his leading opponents to death, he would have deserved severe censure; and this without reference to the justice or injustice of his cause. Yet the opponents of Charles, it must be admitted, were technically guilty of treason. He might have sent them to the scaffold without violating any established principle of jurisprudence. He would not have been compelled to overturn the whole constitution in order to reach them. Here his own case differed widely from theirs. Not only was his condemnation in itself a measure which only the strongest necessity could vindicate; but it could not be procured without taking several previous steps, every one of

which would have required the strongest necessity to vindicate it. It could not be procured without dissolving the Government by military force, without establishing precedents of the most dangerous description, without creating difficulties which the next ten years were spent in removing, without pulling down institutions which it soon became necessary to reconstruct, and setting up others which almost every man was soon impatient to destroy. It was necessary to strike the House of Lords out of the constitution, to exclude members of the House of Commons by force, to make a new crime, a new tribunal, a new mode of procedure. The whole legislative and judicial systems were trampled down for the purpose of taking a single head. Not only those parts of the constitution which the republicans were desirous to destroy, but those which they wished to retain and exalt, were deeply injured by these transactions. High Courts of justice began to usurp the functions of juries. The remaining delegates of the people were soon driven from their seats by the same military violence which had enabled them to exclude their colleagues.

If Charles had been the last of his line, there would have been an intelligible reason for putting him to death. But the blow which terminated his life at once transferred the allegiance of every Royalist to an heir, and an heir who was at liberty. To kill the individual was, under such circumstances, not to destroy, but to release the King.

We detest the character of Charles; but a man ought not

to be removed by a law *ex post facto*, even constitutionally procured, merely because he is detestable. He must also be very dangerous. We can scarcely conceive that any danger which a state can apprehend from any individual could justify the violent measures which were necessary to procure a sentence against Charles. But in fact the danger amounted to nothing. There was indeed, danger from the attachment of a large party to his office. But this danger his execution only increased. His personal influence was little indeed. He had lost the confidence of every party. Churchmen, Catholics, Presbyterians, Independents, his enemies, his friends, his tools, English, Scotch, Irish, all divisions and subdivisions of his people had been deceived by him. His most attached councillors turned away with shame and anguish from his false and hollow policy, plot intertwined with plot, mine sprung beneath mine, agents disowned, promises evaded, one pledge given in private, another in public. "Oh, Mr. Secretary," says Clarendon, in a letter to Nicholas, "those stratagems have given me more sad hours than all the misfortunes in war which have befallen the King, and look like the effects of God's anger towards us."

The abilities of Charles were not formidable. His taste in the fine arts was indeed exquisite; and few modern sovereigns have written or spoken better. But he was not fit for active life. In negotiation he was always trying to dupe others, and duping only himself. As a soldier, he was feeble, dilatory, and miserably wanting, not in personal courage, but in the presence of mind

which his station required. His delay at Gloucester saved the parliamentary party from destruction. At Naseby, in the very crisis of his fortune, his want of self-possession spread a fatal panic through his army. The story which Clarendon tells of that affair reminds us of the excuses by which Bessus and Bobadil explain their cudgellings. A Scotch nobleman, it seems, begged the King not to run upon his death, took hold of his bridle, and turned his horse round. No man who had much value for his life would have tried to perform the same friendly office on that day for Oliver Cromwell.

One thing, and one alone, could make Charles dangerous—a violent death. His tyranny could not break the high spirit of the English people. His arms could not conquer, his arts could not deceive them; but his humiliation and his execution melted them into a generous compassion. Men who die on a scaffold for political offences almost always die well. The eyes of thousands are fixed upon them. Enemies and admirers are watching their demeanour. Every tone of voice, every change of colour, is to go down to posterity. Escape is impossible. Supplication is vain. In such a situation pride and despair have often been known to nerve the weakest minds with fortitude adequate to the occasion. Charles died patiently and bravely; not more patiently or bravely, indeed, than many other victims of political rage; not more patiently or bravely than his own judges, who were not only killed, but tortured; or than Vane, who had always been considered as a timid man. However, the king's conduct during

his trial and at his execution made a prodigious impression. His subjects began to love his memory as heartily as they had hated his person; and posterity has estimated his character from his death rather than from his life.

To represent Charles as a martyr in the cause of Episcopacy is absurd. Those who put him to death cared as little for the Assembly of Divines, as for the Convocation, and would, in all probability, only have hated him the more if he had agreed to set up the Presbyterian discipline. Indeed, in spite of the opinion of Mr. Hallam, we are inclined to think that the attachment of Charles to the Church of England was altogether political. Human nature is, we admit, so capricious that there may be a single, sensitive point, in a conscience which everywhere else is callous. A man without truth or humanity may have some strange scruples about a trifle. There was one devout warrior in the royal camp whose piety bore a great resemblance to that which is ascribed to the King. We mean Colonel Turner. That gallant Cavalier was hanged, after the Restoration, for a flagitious burglary. At the gallows he told the crowd that his mind received great consolation from one reflection: he had always taken off his hat when he went into a church. The character of Charles would scarcely rise in our estimation, if we believed that he was pricked in conscience after the manner of this worthy loyalist, and that while violating all the first rules of Christian morality, he was sincerely scrupulous about church-government. But we acquit him of such weakness. In 1641 he deliberately confirmed

the Scotch Declaration which stated that the government of the church by archbishops and bishops was contrary to the word of God. In 1645, he appears to have offered to set up Popery in Ireland. That a King who had established the Presbyterian religion in one kingdom, and who was willing to establish the Catholic religion in another, should have insurmountable scruples about the ecclesiastical constitution of the third, is altogether incredible. He himself says in his letters that he looks on Episcopacy as a stronger support of monarchical power than even the army. From causes which we have already considered, the Established Church had been, since the Reformation, the great bulwark of the prerogative. Charles wished, therefore, to preserve it. He thought himself necessary both to the Parliament and to the army. He did not foresee, till too late, that by paltering with the Presbyterians, he should put both them and himself into the power of a fiercer and more daring party. If he had foreseen it, we suspect that the royal blood which still cries to Heaven every thirtieth of January, for judgments only to be averted by salt-fish and egg-sauce, would never have been shed. One who had swallowed the Scotch Declaration would scarcely strain at the Covenant.

The death of Charles and the strong measures which led to it raised Cromwell to a height of power fatal to the infant Commonwealth. No men occupy so splendid a place in history as those who have founded monarchies on the ruins of republican institutions. Their glory, if not of the purest, is assuredly of the

most seductive and dazzling kind. In nations broken to the curb, in nations long accustomed to be transferred from one tyrant to another, a man without eminent qualities may easily gain supreme power. The defection of a troop of guards, a conspiracy of eunuchs, a popular tumult, might place an indolent senator or a brutal soldier on the throne of the Roman world. Similar revolutions have often occurred in the despotic states of Asia. But a community which has heard the voice of truth and experienced the pleasures of liberty, in which the merits of statesmen and of systems are freely canvassed, in which obedience is paid, not to persons, but to laws, in which magistrates are regarded, not as the lords, but as the servants of the public, in which the excitement of a party is a necessary of life, in which political warfare is reduced to a system of tactics; such a community is not easily reduced to servitude. Beasts of burden may easily be managed by a new master. But will the wild ass submit to the bonds? Will the unicorn serve and abide by the crib? Will leviathan hold out his nostrils to the book? The mythological conqueror of the East, whose enchantments reduced wild beasts to the tameness of domestic cattle, and who harnessed lions and tigers to his chariot, is but an imperfect type of those extraordinary minds which have thrown a spell on the fierce spirits of nations unaccustomed to control, and have compelled raging factions to obey their reins and swell their triumph. The enterprise, be it good or bad, is one which requires a truly great man. It demands courage, activity, energy, wisdom, firmness, conspicuous virtues,

or vices so splendid and alluring as to resemble virtues.

Those who have succeeded in this arduous undertaking form a very small and a very remarkable class. Parents of tyranny, heirs of freedom, kings among citizens, citizens among kings, they unite in themselves the characteristics of the system which springs from them, and those of the system from which they have sprung. Their reigns shine with a double light, the last and dearest rays of departing freedom mingled with the first and brightest glories of empire in its dawn. The high qualities of such a prince lend to despotism itself a charm drawn from the liberty under which they were formed, and which they have destroyed. He resembles an European who settles within the Tropics, and carries thither the strength and the energetic habits acquired in regions more propitious to the constitution. He differs as widely from princes nursed in the purple of imperial cradles, as the companions of Gama from their dwarfish and imbecile progeny, which, born in a climate unfavourable to its growth and beauty, degenerates more and more, at every descent, from the qualities of the original conquerors.

In this class three men stand pre-eminent, Caesar, Cromwell, and Bonaparte. The highest place in this remarkable triumvirate belongs undoubtedly to Caesar. He united the talents of Bonaparte to those of Cromwell; and he possessed also, what neither Cromwell nor Bonaparte possessed, learning, taste, wit, eloquence, the sentiments and the manners of an accomplished gentleman.

Between Cromwell and Napoleon Mr. Hallam has instituted a parallel, scarcely less ingenious than that which Burke has drawn between Richard Coeur de Lion and Charles the Twelfth of Sweden. In this parallel, however, and indeed throughout his work, we think that he hardly gives Cromwell fair measure. "Cromwell," says he, "far unlike his antitype, never showed any signs of a legislative mind, or any desire to place his renown on that noblest basis, the amelioration of social institutions." The difference in this respect, we conceive, was not in the character of the men, but in the character of the revolutions by means of which they rose to power. The civil war in England had been undertaken to defend and restore; the republicans of France set themselves to destroy. In England, the principles of the common law had never been disturbed, and most even of its forms had been held sacred. In France, the law and its ministers had been swept away together. In France, therefore, legislation necessarily became the first business of the first settled government which rose on the ruins of the old system. The admirers of Inigo Jones have always maintained that his works are inferior to those of Sir Christopher Wren, only because the great fire of London gave Wren such a field for the display of his powers as no architect in the history of the world ever possessed. Similar allowance must be made for Cromwell. If he erected little that was new, it was because there had been no general devastation to clear a space for him. As it was, he reformed the representative system in a most judicious manner. He rendered the administration of

justice uniform throughout the island. We will quote a passage from his speech to the Parliament in September 1656, which contains, we think, simple and rude as the diction is, stronger indications of a legislative mind, than are to be found in the whole range of orations delivered on such occasions before or since.

“There is one general grievance in the nation. It is the law. I think, I may say it, I have as eminent judges in this land as have been had, or that the nation has had for these many years. Truly, I could be particular as to the executive part, to the administration; but that would trouble you. But the truth of it is, there are wicked and abominable laws that will be in your power to alter. To hang a man for sixpence, threepence, I know not what,—to hang for a trifle, and pardon murder, is in the ministration of the law through the ill framing of it. I have known in my experience abominable murders quitted; and to see men lose their lives for petty matters! This is a thing that God will reckon for; and I wish it may not lie upon this nation a day longer than you have an opportunity to give a remedy; and I hope I shall cheerfully join with you in it.”

Mr. Hallam truly says that, though it is impossible to rank Cromwell with Napoleon as a general, “yet his exploits were as much above the level of his contemporaries, and more the effects of an original uneducated capacity.” Bonaparte was trained in the best military schools; the army which he led to Italy was one of the finest that ever existed. Cromwell passed his youth and the prime of his manhood in a civil situation. He never looked

on war till he was more than forty years old. He had first to form himself, and then to form his troops. Out of raw levies he created an army, the bravest and the best disciplined, the most orderly in peace, and the most terrible in war, that Europe had seen. He called this body into existence. He led it to conquest. He never fought a battle without gaining it. He never gained a battle without annihilating the force opposed to him. Yet his victories were not the highest glory of his military system. The respect which his troops paid to property, their attachment to the laws and religion of their country, their submission to the civil power, their temperance, their intelligence, their industry, are without parallel. It was after the Restoration that the spirit which their great leader had infused into them was most signally displayed. At the command of the established government, an established government which had no means of enforcing obedience, fifty thousand soldiers whose backs no enemy had ever seen, either in domestic or in continental war, laid down their arms, and retired into the mass of the people, thenceforward to be distinguished only by superior diligence, sobriety, and regularity in the pursuits, of peace, from the other members of the community which they had saved.

In the general spirit and character of his administration, we think Cromwell far superior to Napoleon. "In the civil government," says Mr. Hallam, "there can be no adequate parallel between one who had sucked only the dregs of a besotted fanaticism, and one to whom the stores of reason and philosophy

were open." These expressions, it seems to us, convey the highest eulogium on our great countryman. Reason and philosophy did not teach the conqueror of Europe to command his passions, or to pursue, as a first object, the happiness of his people. They did not prevent him from risking his fame and his power in a frantic contest against the principles of human nature and the laws of the physical world, against the rage of the winter and the liberty of the sea. They did not exempt him from the influence of that most pernicious of superstitions, a presumptuous fatalism. They did not preserve him from the inebriation of prosperity, or restrain him from indecent querulousness in adversity. On the other hand, the fanaticism of Cromwell never urged him on impracticable undertakings, or confused his perception of the public good. Our countryman, inferior to Bonaparte in invention, was far superior to him in wisdom. The French Emperor is among conquerors what Voltaire is among writers, a miraculous child. His splendid genius was frequently clouded by fits of humour as absurdly perverse as those of the pet of the nursery, who quarrels with his food, and dashes his playthings to pieces. Cromwell was emphatically a man. He possessed, in an eminent degree, that masculine and full-grown robustness of mind, that equally diffused intellectual health, which, if our national partiality does not mislead us, has peculiarly characterised the great men of England. Never was any ruler so conspicuously born for sovereignty. The cup which has intoxicated almost all others, sobered him. His spirit, restless from its own buoyancy in a

lower sphere, reposed in majestic placidity as soon as it had reached the level congenial to it. He had nothing in common with that large class of men who distinguish themselves in subordinate posts, and whose incapacity becomes obvious as soon as the public voice summons them to take the lead. Rapidly as his fortunes grew, his mind expanded more rapidly still. Insignificant as a private citizen, he was a great general; he was a still greater prince. Napoleon had a theatrical manner, in which the coarseness of a revolutionary guard-room was blended with the ceremony of the old Court of Versailles. Cromwell, by the confession even of his enemies, exhibited in his demeanour the simple and natural nobleness of a man neither ashamed of his origin nor vain of his elevation, of a man who had found his proper place in society, and who felt secure that he was competent to fill it. Easy, even to familiarity, where his own dignity was concerned, he was punctilious only for his country. His own character he left to take care of itself; he left it to be defended by his victories in war, and his reforms in peace. But he was a jealous and implacable guardian of the public honour. He suffered a crazy Quaker to insult him in the gallery of Whitehall, and revenged himself only by liberating him and giving him a dinner. But he was prepared to risk the chances of war to avenge the blood of a private Englishman.

No sovereign ever carried to the throne so large a portion of the best qualities of the middling orders, so strong a sympathy with the feelings and interests of his people. He was sometimes

driven to arbitrary measures; but he had a high, stout, honest, English heart. Hence it was that he loved to surround his throne with such men as Hale and Blake. Hence it was that he allowed so large a share of political liberty to his subjects, and that, even when an opposition dangerous to his power and to his person almost compelled him to govern by the sword, he was still anxious to leave a germ from which, at a more favourable season, free institutions might spring. We firmly believe that, if his first Parliament had not commenced its debates by disputing his title, his government would have been as mild at home as it was energetic and able abroad. He was a soldier; he had risen by war. Had his ambition been of an impure or selfish kind, it would have been easy for him to plunge his country into continental hostilities on a large scale, and to dazzle the restless factions which he ruled, by the splendour of his victories. Some of his enemies have sneeringly remarked, that in the successes obtained under his administration he had no personal share; as if a man who had raised himself from obscurity to empire solely by his military talents could have any unworthy reason for shrinking from military enterprise. This reproach is his highest glory. In the success of the English navy he could have no selfish interest. Its triumphs added nothing to his fame; its increase added nothing to his means of overawing his enemies; its great leader was not his friend. Yet he took a peculiar pleasure in encouraging that noble service which, of all the instruments employed by an English government, is the most impotent for mischief, and the most

powerful for good. His administration was glorious, but with no vulgar glory. It was not one of those periods of overstrained and convulsive exertion which necessarily produce debility and languor. Its energy was natural, healthful, temperate. He placed England at the head of the Protestant interest, and in the first rank of Christian powers. He taught every nation to value her friendship and to dread her enmity. But he did not squander her resources in a vain attempt to invest her with that supremacy which no power, in the modern system of Europe, can safely affect, or can long retain.

This noble and sober wisdom had its reward. If he did not carry the banners of the Commonwealth in triumph to distant capitals, if he did not adorn Whitehall with the spoils of the Stadthouse and the Louvre, if he did not portion out Flanders and Germany into principalities for his kinsmen and his generals, he did not, on the other hand, see his country overrun by the armies of nations which his ambition had provoked. He did not drag out the last years of his life an exile and a prisoner, in an unhealthy climate and under an ungenerous gaoler, raging with the impotent desire of vengeance, and brooding over visions of departed glory. He went down to his grave in the fulness of power and fame; and he left to his son an authority which any man of ordinary firmness and prudence would have retained.

But for the weakness of that foolish Ishbosheth, the opinions which we have been expressing would, we believe, now have formed the orthodox creed of good Englishmen. We might now

be writing under the government of his Highness Oliver the Fifth or Richard the Fourth, Protector, by the grace of God, of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the dominions thereto belonging. The form of the great founder of the dynasty, on horseback, as when he led the charge at Naseby or on foot, as when he took the mace from the table of the Commons, would adorn our squares and over look our public offices from Charing Cross; and sermons in his praise would be duly preached on his lucky day, the third of September, by court-chaplains, guiltless of the abomination of the surplice.

But, though his memory has not been taken under the patronage of any party, though every device has been used to blacken it, though to praise him would long have been a punishable crime, truth and merit at last prevail. Cowards who had trembled at the very sound of his name, tools of office, who, like Downing, had been proud of the honour of lacqueying his coach, might insult him in loyal speeches and addresses. Venal poets might transfer to the king the same eulogies little the worse for wear, which they had bestowed on the Protector. A fickle multitude might crowd to shout and scoff round the gibbeted remains of the greatest Prince and Soldier of the age. But when the Dutch cannon startled an effeminate tyrant in his own palace, when the conquests which had been won by the armies of Cromwell were sold to pamper the harlots of Charles, when Englishmen were sent to fight under foreign banners, against the independence of Europe and the Protestant religion,

many honest hearts swelled in secret at the thought of one who had never suffered his country to be ill-used by any but himself. It must indeed have been difficult for any Englishman to see the salaried viceroy of France, at the most important crisis of his fate, sauntering through his haram, yawning and talking nonsense over a despatch, or beslobbering his brother and his courtiers in a fit of maudlin affection, without a respectful and tender remembrance of him before whose genius the young pride of Louis and the veteran craft of Mazarine had stood rebuked, who had humbled Spain on the land and Holland on the sea, and whose imperial voice had arrested the sails of the Libyan pirates and the persecuting fires of Rome. Even to the present day his character, though constantly attacked, and scarcely ever defended, is popular with the great body of our countrymen.

The most blameable act of his life was the execution of Charles. We have already strongly condemned that proceeding; but we by no means consider it as one which attaches any peculiar stigma of infamy to the names of those who participated in it. It was an unjust and injudicious display of violent party spirit; but it was not a cruel or perfidious measure. It had all those features which distinguish the errors of magnanimous and intrepid spirits from base and malignant crimes.

From the moment that Cromwell is dead and buried, we go on in almost perfect harmony with Mr. Hallam to the end of his book. The times which followed the Restoration peculiarly require that unsparing impartiality which is his most

distinguishing virtue. No part of our history, during the last three centuries, presents a spectacle of such general dreariness. The whole breed of our statesmen seems to have degenerated; and their moral and intellectual littleness strikes us with the more disgust, because we see it placed in immediate contrast with the high and majestic qualities of the race which they succeeded. In the great civil war, even the bad cause had been rendered respectable and amiable by the purity and elevation of mind which many of its friends displayed. Under Charles the Second, the best and noblest of ends was disgraced by means the most cruel and sordid. The rage of faction succeeded to the love of liberty. Loyalty died away into servility. We look in vain among the leading politicians of either side for steadiness of principle, or even for that vulgar fidelity to party which, in our time, it is esteemed infamous to violate. The inconsistency, perfidy, and baseness, which the leaders constantly practised, which their followers defended, and which the great body of the people regarded, as it seems, with little disapprobation, appear in the present age almost incredible. In the age of Charles the First, they would, we believe, have excited as much astonishment.

Man, however, is always the same. And when so marked a difference appears between two generations, it is certain that the solution may be found in their respective circumstances. The principal statesmen of the reign of Charles the Second were trained during the civil war and the revolutions which followed it. Such a period is eminently favourable to the growth of quick and

active talents. It forms a class of men, shrewd, vigilant, inventive; of men whose dexterity triumphs over the most perplexing combinations of circumstances, whose presaging instinct no sign of the times can elude. But it is an unpropitious season for the firm and masculine virtues. The statesman who enters on his career at such a time, can form no permanent connections, can make no accurate observations on the higher parts of political science. Before he can attach himself to a party, it is scattered. Before he can study the nature of a government, it is overturned. The oath of abjuration comes close on the oath of allegiance. The association which was subscribed yesterday is burned by the hangman to-day. In the midst of the constant eddy and change, self-preservation becomes the first object of the adventurer. It is a task too hard for the strongest head to keep itself from becoming giddy in the eternal whirl. Public spirit is out of the question. A laxity of principle, without which no public man can be eminent or even safe, becomes too common to be scandalous; and the whole nation looks coolly on instances of apostasy which would startle the foulest turncoat of more settled times.

The history of France since the Revolution affords some striking illustrations of these remarks. The same man was a servant of the Republic, of Bonaparte, of Lewis the Eighteenth, of Bonaparte again after his return from Elba, of Lewis again after his return from Ghent. Yet all these manifold treasons by no means seemed to destroy his influence, or even to fix any peculiar stain of infamy on his character. We, to be sure, did not

know what to make of him; but his countrymen did not seem to be shocked; and in truth they had little right to be shocked: for there was scarcely one Frenchman distinguished in the state or in the army, who had not, according to the best of his talents and opportunities, emulated the example. It was natural, too, that this should be the case. The rapidity and violence with which change followed change in the affairs of France towards the close of the last century had taken away the reproach of inconsistency, unfixed the principles of public men, and produced in many minds a general scepticism and indifference about principles of government.

No Englishman who has studied attentively the reign of Charles the Second, will think himself entitled to indulge in any feelings of national superiority over the *Dictionnaire des Girouettes*. Shaftesbury was surely a far less respectable man than Talleyrand; and it would be injustice even to Fouche to compare him with Lauderdale. Nothing, indeed, can more clearly show how low the standard of political morality had fallen in this country than the fortunes of the two British statesmen whom we have named. The government wanted a ruffian to carry on the most atrocious system of misgovernment with which any nation was ever cursed, to extirpate Presbyterianism by fire and sword, by the drowning of women, by the frightful torture of the boot. And they found him among the chiefs of the rebellion and the subscribers of the Covenant. The opposition looked for a chief to head them in the most desperate attacks ever made, under

the forms of the Constitution, on any English administration; and they selected the minister who had the deepest share in the worst acts of the Court, the soul of the Cabal, the counsellor who had shut up the Exchequer and urged on the Dutch war. The whole political drama was of the same cast. No unity of plan, no decent propriety of character and costume, could be found in that wild and monstrous harlequinade. The whole was made up of extravagant transformations and burlesque contrasts; Atheists turned Puritans; Puritans turned Atheists; republicans defending the divine right of kings; prostitute courtiers clamouring for the liberties of the people; judges inflaming the rage of mobs; patriots pocketing bribes from foreign powers; a Popish prince torturing Presbyterians into Episcopacy in one part of the island; Presbyterians cutting off the heads of Popish noblemen and gentlemen in the other. Public opinion has its natural flux and reflux. After a violent burst, there is commonly a reaction. But vicissitudes so extraordinary as those which marked the reign of Charles the Second can only be explained by supposing an utter want of principle in the political world. On neither side was there fidelity enough to face a reverse. Those honourable retreats from power which, in later days, parties have often made, with loss, but still in good order, in firm union, with unbroken spirit and formidable means of annoyance, were utterly unknown. As soon as a check took place a total rout followed: arms and colours were thrown away. The vanquished troops, like the Italian mercenaries of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, enlisted on the very

field of battle, in the service of the conquerors. In a nation proud of its sturdy justice and plain good sense, no party could be found to take a firm middle stand between the worst of oppositions and the worst of courts. When on charges as wild as Mother Goose's tales, on the testimony of wretches who proclaimed themselves to be spies and traitors, and whom everybody now believes to have been also liars and murderers, the offal of gaols and brothels, the leavings of the hangman's whip and shears, Catholics guilty of nothing but their religion were led like sheep to the Protestant shambles, where were the loyal Tory gentry and the passively obedient clergy? And where, when the time of retribution came, when laws were strained and juries packed to destroy the leaders of the Whigs, when charters were invaded, when Jeffreys and Kirke were making Somersetshire what Lauderdale and Graham had made Scotland, where were the ten thousand brisk boys of Shaftesbury, the members of ignoramus juries, the wearers of the Polish medal? All-powerful to destroy others, unable to save themselves, the members of the two parties oppressed and were oppressed, murdered and were murdered, in their turn. No lucid interval occurred between the frantic paroxysms of two contradictory illusions.

To the frequent changes of the government during the twenty years which had preceded the Restoration, this unsteadiness is in a great measure to be attributed. Other causes had also been at work. Even if the country had been governed by the house of Cromwell or by the remains of the Long Parliament, the extreme

austerity of the Puritans would necessarily have produced a revulsion. Towards the close of the Protectorate many signs indicated that a time of licence was at hand. But the restoration of Charles the Second rendered the change wonderfully rapid and violent. Profligacy became a test of orthodoxy, and loyalty a qualification for rank and office. A deep and general taint infected the morals of the most influential classes, and spread itself through every province of letters. Poetry inflamed the passions; philosophy undermined the principles; divinity itself, inculcating an abject reverence for the Court, gave additional effect to the licentious example of the Court. We look in vain for those qualities which lend a charm to the errors of high and ardent natures, for the generosity, the tenderness, the chivalrous delicacy, which ennoble appetites into passions, and impart to vice itself a portion of the majesty of virtue. The excesses of that age remind us of the humours of a gang of footpads, revelling with their favourite beauties at a flash-house. In the fashionable libertinism there is a hard, cold ferocity, an impudence, a lowness, a dirtiness, which can be paralleled only among the heroes and heroines of that filthy and heartless literature which encouraged it. One nobleman of great abilities wanders about as a Merry-Andrew. Another harangues the mob stark naked from a window. A third lays an ambush to cudgel a man who has offended him. A knot of gentlemen of high rank and influence combine to push their fortunes at Court by circulating stories intended to ruin an innocent girl, stories which had no foundation,

and which, if they had been true, would never have passed the lips of a man of honour. A dead child is found in the palace, the offspring of some maid of honour by some courtier, or perhaps by Charles himself. The whole flight of pandars and buffoons pounce upon it, and carry it in triumph to the royal laboratory, where his Majesty, after a brutal jest, dissects it for the amusement of the assembly, and probably of its father among the rest. The favourite Duchess stamps about Whitehall, cursing and swearing. The ministers employ their time at the council-board in making mouths at each other and taking off each other's gestures for the amusement of the King. The Peers at a conference begin to pommel each other and to tear collars and periwigs. A speaker in the House of Commons gives offence to the Court. He is waylaid by a gang of bullies, and his nose is cut to the bone. This ignominious dissoluteness, or rather, if we may venture to designate it by the only proper word, blackguardism of feeling and manners, could not but spread from private to public life. The cynical sneers, and epicurean sophistry, which had driven honour and virtue from one part of the character, extended their influence over every other. The second generation of the statesmen of this reign were worthy pupils of the schools in which they had been trained, of the gaming-table of Grammont, and the tiring-room of Nell. In no other age could such a trifler as Buckingham have exercised any political influence. In no other age could the path to power and glory have been thrown open to the manifold infamies of Churchill.

The history of Churchill shows, more clearly perhaps than that of any other individual, the malignity and extent of the corruption which had eaten into the heart of the public morality. An English gentleman of good family attaches himself to a Prince who has seduced his sister, and accepts rank and wealth as the price of her shame and his own. He then repays by ingratitude the benefits which he has purchased by ignominy, betrays his patron in a manner which the best cause cannot excuse, and commits an act, not only of private treachery, but of distinct military desertion. To his conduct at the crisis of the fate of James, no service in modern times has, as far as we remember, furnished any parallel. The conduct of Ney, scandalous enough no doubt, is the very fastidiousness of honour in comparison of it. The perfidy of Arnold approaches it most nearly. In our age and country no talents, no services, no party attachments, could bear any man up under such mountains of infamy. Yet, even before Churchill had performed those great actions which in some degree redeem his character with posterity, the load lay very lightly on him. He had others in abundance to keep him in countenance. Godolphin, Orford, Danby, the trimmer Halifax, the renegade Sunderland, were all men of the same class.

Where such was the political morality of the noble and the wealthy, it may easily be conceived that those professions which, even in the best times, are peculiarly liable to corruption, were in a frightful state. Such a bench and such a bar England has never seen. Jones, Scroggs, Jeffreys, North, Wright, Sawyer, Williams,

are to this day the spots and blemishes of our legal chronicles. Differing in constitution and in situation, whether blustering or cringing, whether persecuting Protestant or Catholics, they were equally unprincipled and inhuman. The part which the Church played was not equally atrocious; but it must have been exquisitely diverting to a scoffer. Never were principles so loudly professed, and so shamelessly abandoned. The Royal prerogative had been magnified to the skies in theological works. The doctrine of passive obedience had been preached from innumerable pulpits. The University of Oxford had sentenced the works of the most moderate constitutionalists to the flames. The accession of a Catholic King, the frightful cruelties committed in the west of England, never shook the steady loyalty of the clergy. But did they serve the King for nought? He laid his hand on them, and they cursed him to his face. He touched the revenue of a college and the liberty of some prelates; and the whole profession set up a yell worthy of Hugh Peters himself. Oxford sent her plate to an invader with more alacrity than she had shown when Charles the First requested it. Nothing was said about the wickedness of resistance till resistance had done its work, till the anointed vicegerent of Heaven had been driven away, and till it had become plain that he would never be restored, or would be restored at least under strict limitations. The clergy went back, it must be owned, to their old theory, as soon as they found that it would do them no harm.

It is principally to the general baseness and profligacy of the

times that Clarendon is indebted for his high reputation. He was, in every respect, a man unfit for his age, at once too good for it and too bad for it. He seemed to be one of the ministers of Elizabeth, transplanted at once to a state of society widely different from that in which the abilities of such ministers had been serviceable. In the sixteenth century, the Royal prerogative had scarcely been called in question. A Minister who held it high was in no danger, so long as he used it well. That attachment to the Crown, that extreme jealousy of popular encroachments, that love, half religious half political, for the Church, which, from the beginning of the second session of the Long Parliament, showed itself in Clarendon, and which his sufferings, his long residence in France, and his high station in the government, served to strengthen, would a hundred years earlier, have secured to him the favour of his sovereign without rendering him odious to the people. His probity, his correctness in private life, his decency of deportment, and his general ability, would not have misbecome a colleague of Walsingham and Burleigh. But, in the times on which he was cast, his errors and his virtues were alike out of place. He imprisoned men without trial. He was accused of raising unlawful contributions on the people for the support of the army. The abolition of the act which ensured the frequent holding of Parliaments was one of his favourite objects. He seems to have meditated the revival of the Star-Chamber and the High Commission Court. His zeal for the prerogative made him unpopular; but it could not secure to him the favour of a master

far more desirous of ease and pleasure than of power. Charles would rather have lived in exile and privacy, with abundance of money, a crowd of mimics to amuse him, and a score of mistresses, than have purchased the absolute dominion of the world by the privations and exertions to which Clarendon was constantly urging him. A councillor who was always bringing him papers and giving him advice, and who stoutly refused to compliment Lady Castlemaine and to carry messages to Mistress Stewart, soon became more hateful to him than ever Cromwell had been. Thus, considered by the people as an oppressor, by the Court as a censor, the Minister fell from his high office with a ruin more violent and destructive than could ever have been his fate, if he had either respected the principles of the Constitution or flattered the vices of the King.

Mr. Hallam has formed, we think, a most correct estimate of the character and administration of Clarendon. But he scarcely makes a sufficient allowance for the wear and tear which honesty almost necessarily sustains in the friction of political life, and which, in times so rough as those through which Clarendon passed, must be very considerable. When these are fairly estimated, we think that his integrity may be allowed to pass muster. A high-minded man he certainly was not, either in public or in private affairs. His own account of his conduct in the affair of his daughter is the most extraordinary passage in autobiography. We except nothing even in the Confessions of Rousseau. Several writers have taken a perverted and absurd

pride in representing themselves as detestable; but no other ever laboured hard to make himself despicable and ridiculous. In one important particular Clarendon showed as little regard to the honour of his country as he had shown to that of his family. He accepted a subsidy from France for the relief of Portugal. But this method of obtaining money was afterwards practised to a much greater extent and for objects much less respectable, both by the Court and by the Opposition.

These pecuniary transactions are commonly considered as the most disgraceful part of the history of those times: and they were no doubt highly reprehensible. Yet, in justice to the Whigs and to Charles himself, we must admit that they were not so shameful or atrocious as at the present day they appear. The effect of violent animosities between parties has always been an indifference to the general welfare and honour of the State. A politician, where factions run high, is interested not for the whole people, but for his own section of it. The rest are, in his view, strangers, enemies, or rather pirates. The strongest aversion which he can feel to any foreign power is the ardour of friendship, when compared with the loathing which he entertains towards those domestic foes with whom he is cooped up in a narrow space, with whom he lives in a constant interchange of petty injuries and insults, and from whom, in the day of their success, he has to expect severities far beyond any that a conqueror from a distant country would inflict. Thus, in Greece, it was a point of honour for a man to cleave to his party against his country. No aristocratical citizen

of Samos or Corcyra would have hesitated to call in the aid of Lacedaemon. The multitude, on the contrary, looked everywhere to Athens. In the Italian states of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, from the same cause, no man was so much a Pisan or a Florentine as a Ghibelline or a Guelf. It may be doubted whether there was a single individual who would have scrupled to raise his party from a state of depression, by opening the gates of his native city to a French or an Arragonese force. The Reformation, dividing almost every European country into two parts, produced similar effects. The Catholic was too strong for the Englishman, the Huguenot for the Frenchman. The Protestant statesmen of Scotland and France called in the aid of Elizabeth; and the Papists of the League brought a Spanish army into the very heart of France. The commotions to which the French Revolution gave rise were followed by the same consequences. The Republicans in every part of Europe were eager to see the armies of the National Convention and the Directory appear among them, and exalted in defeats which distressed and humbled those whom they considered as their worst enemies, their own rulers. The princes and nobles of France, on the other hand, did their utmost to bring foreign invaders to Paris. A very short time has elapsed since the Apostolical party in Spain invoked, too successfully, the support of strangers.

The great contest which raged in England during the seventeenth century extinguished, not indeed in the body of the people, but in those classes which were most actively engaged

in politics, almost all national feelings. Charles the Second and many of his courtiers had passed a large part of their lives in banishment, living on the bounty of foreign treasuries, soliciting foreign aid to re-establish monarchy in their native country. The King's own brother had fought in Flanders, under the banners of Spain, against the English armies. The oppressed Cavaliers in England constantly looked to the Louvre and the Escorial for deliverance and revenge. Clarendon censures the continental governments with great bitterness for not interfering in our internal dissensions. It is not strange, therefore, that, amidst the furious contests which followed the Restoration, the violence of party feeling should produce effects which would probably have attended it even in an age less distinguished by laxity of principle and indelicacy of sentiment. It was not till a natural death had terminated the paralytic old age of the Jacobite party that the evil was completely at an end. The Whigs long looked to Holland, the High Tories to France. The former concluded the Barrier Treaty; the latter entreated the Court of Versailles to send an expedition to England. Many men, who, however erroneous their political notions might be, were unquestionably honourable in private life, accepted money without scruple from the foreign powers favourable to the Pretender.

Never was there less of national feeling among the higher orders than during the reign of Charles the Second. That Prince, on the one side, thought it better to be the deputy of an absolute king than the King of a free people. Algernon Sydney, on the

other hand, would gladly have aided France in all her ambitious schemes, and have seen England reduced to the condition of a province, in the wild hope that a foreign despot would assist him to establish his darling republic. The King took the money of France to assist him in the enterprise which he meditated against the liberty of his subjects, with as little scruple as Frederic of Prussia or Alexander of Russia accepted our subsidies in time of war. The leaders of the Opposition no more thought themselves disgraced by the presents of Lewis, than a gentleman of our own time thinks himself disgraced by the liberality of powerful and wealthy members of his party who pay his election bill. The money which the King received from France had been largely employed to corrupt members of Parliament. The enemies of the court might think it fair, or even absolutely necessary, to encounter bribery with bribery. Thus they took the French gratuities, the needy among them for their own use, the rich probably for the general purposes of the party, without any scruple. If we compare their conduct not with that of English statesmen in our own time, but with that of persons in those foreign countries which are now situated as England then was, we shall probably see reason to abate something of the severity of censure with which it has been the fashion to visit those proceedings. Yet when every allowance is made, the transaction is sufficiently offensive. It is satisfactory to find that Lord Russell stands free from any imputation of personal participation in the spoil. An age so miserably poor in all the moral qualities which

render public characters respectable can ill spare the credit which it derives from a man, not indeed conspicuous for talents or knowledge, but honest even in his errors, respectable in every relation of life, rationally pious, steadily and placidly brave.

The great improvement which took place in our breed of public men is principally to be ascribed to the Revolution. Yet that memorable event, in a great measure, took its character from the very vices which it was the means of reforming. It was assuredly a happy revolution, and a useful revolution; but it was not, what it has often been called, a glorious revolution. William, and William alone, derived glory from it. The transaction was, in almost every part, discreditable to England. That a tyrant who had violated the fundamental laws of the country, who had attacked the rights of its greatest corporations, who had begun to persecute the established religion of the state, who had never respected the law either in his superstition or in his revenge, could not be pulled down without the aid of a foreign army, is a circumstance not very grateful to our national pride. Yet this is the least degrading part of the story. The shameless insincerity of the great and noble, the warm assurances of general support which James received, down to the moment of general desertion, indicate a meanness of spirit and a looseness of morality most disgraceful to the age. That the enterprise succeeded, at least that it succeeded without bloodshed or commotion, was principally owing to an act of ungrateful perfidy, such as no soldier had ever before committed, and to those monstrous fictions respecting

the birth of the Prince of Wales which persons of the highest rank were not ashamed to circulate. In all the proceedings of the convention, in the conference particularly, we see that littleness of mind which is the chief characteristic of the times. The resolutions on which the two Houses at last agreed were as bad as any resolutions for so excellent a purpose could be. Their feeble and contradictory language was evidently intended to save the credit of the Tories, who were ashamed to name what they were not ashamed to do. Through the whole transaction no commanding talents were displayed by any Englishman; no extraordinary risks were run; no sacrifices were made for the deliverance of the nation, except the sacrifice which Churchill made of honour, and Anne of natural affection.

It was in some sense fortunate, as we have already said, for the Church of England, that the Reformation in this country was effected by men who cared little about religion. And, in the same manner, it was fortunate for our civil government that the Revolution was in a great measure effected by men who cared little about their political principles. At such a crisis, splendid talents and strong passions might have done more harm than good. There was far greater reason to fear that too much would be attempted, and that violent movements would produce an equally violent reaction, than that too little would be done in the way of change. But narrowness of intellect, and flexibility of principle, though they may be serviceable, can never be respectable.

If in the Revolution itself, there was little that can properly

be called glorious, there was still less in the events which followed. In a church which had as one man declared the doctrine of resistance unchristian, only four hundred persons refused to take the oath of allegiance to a government founded on resistance. In the preceding generation, both the Episcopal and the Presbyterian clergy, rather than concede points of conscience not more important, had resigned their livings by thousands.

The churchmen, at the time of the Revolution, justified their conduct by all those profligate sophisms which are called Jesuitical, and which are commonly reckoned among the peculiar sins of Popery, but which, in fact, are everywhere the anodynes employed by minds rather subtle than strong, to quiet those internal twinges which they cannot but feel and which they will not obey. As the oath taken by the clergy was in the teeth of their principles, so was their conduct in the teeth of their oath. Their constant machinations against the Government to which they had sworn fidelity brought a reproach on their order and on Christianity itself. A distinguished prelate has not scrupled to say that the rapid increase of infidelity at that time was principally produced by the disgust which the faithless conduct of his brethren excited in men not sufficiently candid or judicious to discern the beauties of the system amidst the vices of its ministers.

But the reproach was not confined to the Church. In every political party in the Cabinet itself, duplicity and perfidy abounded. The very men whom William loaded with benefits

and in whom he reposed most confidence, with his seals of office in their hands, kept up a correspondence with the exiled family. Orford, Leeds, and Shrewsbury were guilty of this odious treachery. Even Devonshire is not altogether free from suspicion. It may well be conceived that, at such a time, such a nature as that of Marlborough would riot in the very luxury of baseness. His former treason, thoroughly furnished with all that makes infamy exquisite, placed him under the disadvantage which attends every artist from the time that he produces a masterpiece. Yet his second great stroke may excite wonder, even in those who appreciate all the merit of the first. Lest his admirers should be able to say that at the time of the Revolution he had betrayed his King from any other than selfish motives, he proceeded to betray his country. He sent intelligence to the French Court of a secret expedition intended to attack Brest. The consequence was that the expedition failed, and that eight hundred British soldiers lost their lives from the abandoned villainy of a British general. Yet this man has been canonized by so many eminent writers that to speak of him as he deserves may seem scarcely decent.

The reign of William the Third, as Mr. Hallam happily says, was the Nadir of the national prosperity. It was also the Nadir of the national character. It was the time when the rank harvest of vices sown during thirty years of licentiousness and confusion was gathered in; but it was also the seed-time of great virtues.

The press was emancipated from the censorship soon after the Revolution; and the Government immediately fell under

the censorship of the press. Statesmen had a scrutiny to endure which was every day becoming more and more severe. The extreme violence of opinions abated. The Whigs learned moderation in office; the Tories learned the principles of liberty in opposition. The parties almost constantly approximated, often met, sometimes crossed each other. There were occasional bursts of violence; but, from the time of the Revolution, those bursts were constantly becoming less and less terrible. The severity with which the Tories, at the close of the reign of Anne, treated some of those who had directed the public affairs during the war of the Grand Alliance, and the retaliatory measures of the Whigs, after the accession of the House of Hanover, cannot be justified; but they were by no means in the style of the infuriated parties, whose alternate murders had disgraced our history towards the close of the reign of Charles the Second. At the fall of Walpole far greater moderation was displayed. And from that time it has been the practice, a practice not strictly according to the theory of our Constitution, but still most salutary, to consider the loss of office, and the public disapprobation, as punishments sufficient for errors in the administration not imputable to personal corruption. Nothing, we believe, has contributed more than this lenity to raise the character of public men. Ambition is of itself a game sufficiently hazardous and sufficiently deep to inflame the passions without adding property, life, and liberty to the stake. Where the play runs so desperately high as in the seventeenth century, honour is at an end. Statesmen instead of

being, as they should be, at once mild and steady, are at once ferocious and inconsistent. The axe is for ever before their eyes. A popular outcry sometimes unnerves them, and sometimes makes them desperate; it drives them to unworthy compliances, or to measures of vengeance as cruel as those which they have reason to expect. A Minister in our times need not fear either to be firm or to be merciful. Our old policy in this respect was as absurd as that of the king in the Eastern tale who proclaimed that any physician who pleased might come to court and prescribe for his diseases, but that if the remedies failed the adventurer should lose his head. It is easy to conceive how many able men would refuse to undertake the cure on such conditions; how much the sense of extreme danger would confuse the perceptions, and cloud the intellect of the practitioner, at the very crisis which most called for self-possession, and how strong his temptation would be, if he found that he had committed a blunder, to escape the consequences of it by poisoning his patient.

But in fact it would have been impossible, since the Revolution, to punish any Minister for the general course of his policy, with the slightest semblance of justice; for since that time no Minister has been able to pursue any general course of policy without the approbation of the Parliament. The most important effects of that great change were, as Mr. Hallam has most truly said, and most ably shown, those which it indirectly produced. Thenceforward it became the interest of the executive government to protect those very doctrines which an executive

government is in general inclined to persecute. The sovereign, the ministers, the courtiers, at last even the universities and the clergy, were changed into advocates of the right of resistance. In the theory of the Whigs, in the situation of the Tories, in the common interest of all public men, the Parliamentary constitution of the country found perfect security. The power of the House of Commons, in particular, has been steadily on the increase. Since supplies have been granted for short terms and appropriated to particular services, the approbation of that House has been as necessary in practice to the executive administration as it has always been in theory to taxes and to laws.

Mr. Hallam appears to have begun with the reign of Henry the Seventh, as the period at which what is called modern history, in contradistinction to the history of the middle ages, is generally supposed to commence. He has stopped at the accession of George the Third, "from unwillingness" as he says, "to excite the prejudices of modern politics, especially those connected with personal character." These two eras, we think, deserved the distinction on other grounds. Our remote posterity, when looking back on our history in that comprehensive manner in which remote posterity alone can, without much danger of error, look back on it, will probably observe those points with peculiar interest. They are, if we mistake not, the beginning and the end of an entire and separate chapter in our annals. The period which lies between them is a perfect cycle, a great year of the public mind.

In the reign of Henry the Seventh, all the political differences which had agitated England since the Norman conquest seemed to be set at rest. The long and fierce struggle between the Crown and the Barons had terminated. The grievances which had produced the rebellions of Tyler and Cade had disappeared. Villanage was scarcely known. The two royal houses, whose conflicting claims had long convulsed the kingdom, were at length united. The claimants whose pretensions, just or unjust, had disturbed the new settlement, were overthrown. In religion there was no open dissent, and probably very little secret heresy. The old subjects of contention, in short, had vanished; those which were to succeed had not yet appeared.

Soon, however, new principles were announced; principles which were destined to keep England during two centuries and a half in a state of commotion. The Reformation divided the people into two great parties. The Protestants were victorious. They again subdivided themselves. Political factions were engrafted on theological sects. The mutual animosities of the two parties gradually emerged into the light of public life. First came conflicts in Parliament; then civil war; then revolutions upon revolutions, each attended by its appurtenance of proscriptions, and persecutions, and tests; each followed by severe measures on the part of the conquerors; each exciting a deadly and festering hatred in the conquered. During the reign of George the Second, things were evidently tending to repose. At the close of that reign, the nation had completed the great revolution which commenced

in the early part of the sixteenth century, and was again at rest, The fury of sects had died away. The Catholics themselves practically enjoyed toleration; and more than toleration they did not yet venture even to desire. Jacobitism was a mere name. Nobody was left to fight for that wretched cause, and very few to drink for it. The Constitution, purchased so dearly, was on every side extolled and worshipped. Even those distinctions of party which must almost always be found in a free state could scarcely be traced. The two great bodies which, from the time of the Revolution, had been gradually tending to approximation, were now united in emulous support of that splendid Administration which smote to the dust both the branches of the House of Bourbon. The great battle for our ecclesiastical and civil polity had been fought and won. The wounds had been healed. The victors and the vanquished were rejoicing together. Every person acquainted with the political writers of the last generation will recollect the terms in which they generally speak of that time. It was a glimpse of a golden age of union and glory, a short interval of rest, which had been preceded by centuries of agitation, and which centuries of agitation were destined to follow.

How soon faction again began to ferment is well known. The Letters of Junius, in Burke's Thoughts on the Cause of the Discontents, and in many other writings of less merit, the violent dissensions which speedily convulsed the country are imputed to the system of favouritism which George the Third introduced, to the influence of Bute, or to the profligacy of those who called

themselves the King's friends. With all deference to the eminent writers to whom we have referred, we may venture to say that they lived too near the events of which they treated to judge correctly. The schism which was then appearing in the nation, and which has been from that time almost constantly widening, had little in common with those schisms which had divided it during the reigns of the Tudors and the Stuarts. The symptoms of popular feeling, indeed, will always be in a great measure the same; but the principle which excited that feeling was here new. The support which was given to Wilkes, the clamour for reform during the American war, the disaffected conduct of large classes of people at the time of the French Revolution, no more resembled the opposition which had been offered to the government of Charles the Second, than that opposition resembled the contest between the Roses.

In the political as in the natural body, a sensation is often referred to a part widely different from that in which it really resides. A man whose leg is cut off fancies that he feels a pain in his toe. And in the same manner the people, in the earlier part of the late reign, sincerely attributed their discontent to grievances which had been effectually lopped off. They imagined that the prerogative was too strong for the Constitution, that the principles of the Revolution were abandoned, that the system of the Stuarts was restored. Every impartial man must now acknowledge that these charges were groundless. The conduct of the Government with respect to the Middlesex election would

have been contemplated with delight by the first generation of Whigs. They would have thought it a splendid triumph of the cause of liberty that the King and the Lords should resign to the lower House a portion of the legislative power, and allow it to incapacitate without their consent. This, indeed, Mr. Burke clearly perceived. "When the House of Commons," says he, "in an endeavour to obtain new advantages at the expense of the other orders of the state, for the benefit of the commons at large, have pursued strong measures, if it were not just, it was at least natural, that the constituents should connive at all their proceedings; because we ourselves were ultimately to profit. But when this submission is urged to us in a contest between the representatives and ourselves, and where nothing can be put into their scale which is not taken from ours, they fancy us to be children when they tell us that they are our representatives, our own flesh and blood, and that all the stripes they give us are for our good." These sentences contain, in fact, the whole explanation of the mystery. The conflict of the seventeenth century was maintained by the Parliament against the Crown. The conflict which commenced in the middle of the eighteenth century, which still remains undecided, and in which our children and grandchildren will probably be called to act or to suffer, is between a large portion of the people on the one side, and the Crown and the Parliament united on the other.

The privileges of the House of Commons, those privileges which, in 1642, all London rose in arms to defend, which the

people considered as synonymous with their own liberties, and in comparison of which they took no account of the most precious and sacred principles of English jurisprudence, have now become nearly as odious as the rigours of martial law. That power of committing which the people anciently loved to see the House of Commons exercise, is now, at least when employed against libellers, the most unpopular power in the Constitution. If the Commons were to suffer the Lords to amend money-bills, we do not believe that the people would care one straw about the matter. If they were to suffer the Lords even to originate money-bills, we doubt whether such a surrender of their constitutional rights would excite half so much dissatisfaction as the exclusion of strangers from a single important discussion. The gallery in which the reporters sit has become a fourth estate of the realm. The publication of the debates, a practice which seemed to the most liberal statesmen of the old school full of danger to the great safeguards of public liberty, is now regarded by many persons as a safeguard tantamount, and more than tantamount, to all the rest together.

Burke, in a speech on parliamentary reform which is the more remarkable because it was delivered long before the French Revolution, has described, in striking language, the change in public feeling of which we speak. "It suggests melancholy reflections," says he, "in consequence of the strange course we have long held, that we are now no longer quarrelling about the character, or about the conduct of men, or the tenor of measures;

but we are grown out of humour with the English Constitution itself; this is become the object of the animosity of Englishmen. This constitution in former days used to be the envy of the world; it was the pattern for politicians; the theme of the eloquent; the meditation of the philosopher in every part of the world. As to Englishmen, it was their pride, their consolation. By it they lived, and for it they were ready to die. Its defects, if it had any, were partly covered by partiality, and partly borne by prudence. Now all its excellencies are forgot, its faults are forcibly dragged into day, exaggerated by every artifice of misrepresentation. It is despised and rejected of men; and every device and invention of ingenuity or idleness is set up in opposition, or in preference to it." We neither adopt nor condemn the language of reprobation which the great orator here employs. We call him only as a witness to the fact. That the revolution of public feeling which he described was then in progress is indisputable; and it is equally indisputable, we think, that it is in progress still.

To investigate and classify the causes of so great a change would require far more thought, and far more space, than we at present have to bestow. But some of them are obvious. During the contest which the Parliament carried on against the Stuarts, it had only to cheek and complain. It has since had to govern. As an attacking body, it could select its points of attack, and it naturally chose those on which it was likely to receive public support. As a ruling body, it has neither the same liberty of choice, nor the same motives to gratify the people. With the power of an

executive government, it has drawn to itself some of the vices, and all the unpopularity of an executive government. On the House of Commons above all, possessed as it is of the public purse, and consequently of the public sword, the nation throws all the blame of an ill-conducted war, of a blundering negotiation, of a disgraceful treaty, of an embarrassing commercial crisis. The delays of the Court of Chancery, the misconduct of a judge at Van Diemen's Land, any thing, in short, which in any part of the administration any person feels as a grievance, is attributed to the tyranny, or at least to the negligence, of that all-powerful body. Private individuals pester it with their wrongs and claims. A merchant appeals to it from the Courts of Rio Janeiro or St. Petersburg. A historical painter complains to it that his department of art finds no encouragement. Anciently the Parliament resembled a member of opposition, from whom no places are expected, who is not expected to confer favours and propose measures, but merely to watch and censure, and who may, therefore, unless he is grossly injudicious, be popular with the great body of the community. The Parliament now resembles the same person put into office, surrounded by petitioners whom twenty times his patronage would not satisfy, stunned with complaints, buried in memorials, compelled by the duties of his station to bring forward measures similar to those which he was formerly accustomed to observe and to check, and perpetually encountered by objections similar to those which it was formerly his business to raise.

Perhaps it may be laid down as a general rule that a legislative assembly, not constituted on democratical principles, cannot be popular long after it ceases to be weak. Its zeal for what the people, rightly or wrongly, conceive to be their interests, its sympathy with their mutable and violent passions, are merely the effects of the particular circumstances in which it is placed. As long as it depends for existence on the public favour, it will employ all the means in its power to conciliate that favour. While this is the case, defects in its constitution are of little consequence. But, as the close union of such a body with the nation is the effect of an identity of interests not essential but accidental, it is in some measure dissolved from the time at which the danger which produced it ceases to exist.

Hence, before the Revolution, the question of Parliamentary reform was of very little importance. The friends of liberty had no very ardent wish for reform. The strongest Tories saw no objections to it. It is remarkable that Clarendon loudly applauds the changes which Cromwell introduced, changes far stronger than the Whigs of the present day would in general approve. There is no reason to think, however, that the reform effected by Cromwell made any great difference in the conduct of the Parliament. Indeed, if the House of Commons had, during the reign of Charles the Second, been elected by universal suffrage, or if all the seats had been put up to sale, as in the French Parliaments, it would, we suspect, have acted very much as it did. We know how strongly the Parliament of Paris exerted itself

in favour of the people on many important occasions; and the reason is evident. Though it did not emanate from the people, its whole consequence depended on the support of the people.

From the time of the Revolution the House of Commons has been gradually becoming what it now is, a great council of state, containing many members chosen freely by the people, and many others anxious to acquire the favour of the people; but, on the whole, aristocratical in its temper and interest. It is very far from being an illiberal and stupid oligarchy; but it is equally far from being an express image of the general feeling. It is influenced by the opinion of the people, and influenced powerfully, but slowly and circuitously. Instead of outrunning the public mind, as before the Revolution it frequently did, it now follows with slow steps and at a wide distance. It is therefore necessarily unpopular; and the more so because the good which it produces is much less evident to common perception than the evil which it inflicts. It bears the blame of all the mischief which is done, or supposed to be done, by its authority or by its connivance. It does not get the credit, on the other hand, of having prevented those innumerable abuses which do not exist solely because the House of Commons exists.

A large part of the nation is certainly desirous of a reform in the representative system. How large that part may be, and how strong its desires on the subject may be, it is difficult to say. It is only at intervals that the clamour on the subject is loud and vehement. But it seems to us that, during the remissions, the

feeling gathers strength, and that every successive burst is more violent than that which preceded it. The public attention may be for a time diverted to the Catholic claims or the Mercantile code but it is probable that at no very distant period, perhaps in the lifetime of the present generation, all other questions will merge in that which is, in a certain degree, connected with them all.

Already we seem to ourselves to perceive the signs of unquiet times the vague presentiment of something great and strange which pervades the community, the restless and turbid hopes of those who have everything to gain, the dimly hinted forebodings of those who have everything to lose. Many indications might be mentioned, in themselves indeed as insignificant as straws; but even the direction of a straw, to borrow the illustration of Bacon, will show from what quarter the storm is setting in.

A great statesman might, by judicious and timely reformations by reconciling the two great branches of the natural aristocracy, the capitalists and the landowners, and by so widening the base of the government as to interest in its defence the whole of the middle class that brave, honest, and sound-hearted class, which is as anxious for the maintenance of order and the security of property, as it is hostile to corruption and oppression, succeed in averting a struggle to which no rational friend of liberty or of law can look forward without great apprehensions. There are those who will be contented with nothing but demolition; and there are those who shrink from all repair. There are innovators who long for a President and a National Convention; and there are bigots

who, while cities larger and richer than the capitals of many great kingdoms are calling out for representatives to watch over their interests, select some hackneyed jobber in boroughs, some peer of the narrowest and smallest mind, as the fittest depository of a forfeited franchise. Between these extremes there lies a more excellent way. Time is bringing round another crisis analogous to that which occurred in the seventeenth century. We stand in a situation similar to that in which our ancestors stood under the reign of James the First. It will soon again be necessary to reform that we may preserve, to save the fundamental principles of the Constitution by alterations in the subordinate parts. It will then be possible, as it was possible two hundred years ago, to protect vested rights, to secure every useful institution, every institution endeared by antiquity and noble associations, and, at the same time, to introduce into the system improvements harmonizing with the original plan. It remains to be seen whether two hundred years have made us wiser.

We know of no great revolution which might not have been prevented by compromise early and graciously made. Firmness is a great virtue in public affairs; but it has its proper sphere. Conspiracies and insurrections in which small minorities are engaged, the outbreakings of popular violence unconnected with any extensive project or any durable principle, are best repressed by vigour and decision. To shrink from them is to make them formidable. But no wise ruler will confound the pervading taint with the slight local irritation. No wise ruler will treat the deeply

seated discontents of a great party, as he treats the fury of a mob which destroys mills and power-looms. The neglect of this distinction has been fatal even to governments strong in the power of the sword. The present time is indeed a time of peace and order. But it is at such a time that fools are most thoughtless and wise men most thoughtful. That the discontents which have agitated the country during the late and the present reign, and which, though not always noisy, are never wholly dormant, will again break forth with aggravated symptoms, is almost as certain as that the tides and seasons will follow their appointed course. But in all movements of the human mind which tend to great revolutions there is a crisis at which moderate concession may amend, conciliate, and preserve. Happy will it be for England if, at that crisis her interests be confided to men for whom history has not recorded the long series of human crimes and follies in vain.

BURLEIGH AND HIS TIMES

(April 1832) *Memoirs of the Life and Administration of the Right Honourable William Cecil Lord Burghley, Secretary of State in the Reign of King Edward the Sixth, and Lord High Treasurer, of England in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth. Containing an historical View of the Times in which he lived, and of the many eminent and illustrious Persons with whom he was connected; with Extracts from his Private and Official Correspondence and other Papers, now first published from the Originals. By the Reverend EDWARD NARES, D.D., Regius Professor of Modern History in the University of Oxford. 3 vols. 4to. London: 1828, 1832.*

THE work of Dr. Nares has filled us with astonishment similar to that which Captain Lemuel Gulliver felt when first he landed in Brobdingnag, and saw corn as high as the oaks in the New Forest, thimbles as large as buckets, and wrens of the bulk of turkeys. The whole book, and every component part of it, is on a gigantic scale. The title is as long as an ordinary preface: the prefatory matter would furnish out an ordinary book; and the book contains as much reading as an ordinary library. We cannot sum up the merits of the stupendous mass of paper which lies before us better than by saying that it consists of about two thousand closely printed quarto pages, that it occupies fifteen hundred inches cubic measure, and that it weighs sixty pounds avoirdupois. Such a book might, before the deluge, have been

considered as light reading by Hilpa and Shallum. But unhappily the life of man is now three-score years and ten; and we cannot but think it somewhat unfair in Dr. Nares to demand from us so large a portion of so short an existence.

Compared with the labour of reading through these volumes, all other labour, the labour of thieves on the treadmill, of children in factories, of negroes in sugar plantations, is an agreeable recreation. There was, it is said, a criminal in Italy, who was suffered to make his choice between Guicciardini and the galleys. He chose the history. But the war of Pisa was too much for him. He changed his mind, and went to the oar. Guicciardini, though certainly not the most amusing of writers, is a Herodotus or a Froissart, when compared with Dr. Nares. It is not merely in bulk, but in specific gravity also, that these memoirs exceed all other human compositions. On every subject which the Professor discusses, he produces three times as many pages as another man; and one of his pages is as tedious as another man's three. His book is swelled to its vast dimensions by endless repetitions, by episodes which have nothing to do with the main action, by quotations from books which are in every circulating library, and by reflections which, when they happen to be just, are so obvious that they must necessarily occur to the mind of every reader. He employs more words in expounding and defending a truism than any other writer would employ in supporting a paradox. Of the rules of historical perspective, he has not the faintest notion. There is neither foreground nor background in his delineation.

The wars of Charles the Fifth in Germany are detailed at almost as much length as in Robertson's life of that prince. The troubles of Scotland are related as fully as in M'Crie's Life of John Knox. It would be most unjust to deny that Dr. Nares is a man of great industry and research; but he is so utterly incompetent to arrange the materials which he has collected that he might as well have left them in their original repositories.

Neither the facts which Dr. Nares has discovered, nor the arguments which he urges, will, we apprehend, materially alter the opinion generally entertained by judicious readers of history concerning his hero. Lord Burleigh can hardly be called a great man. He was not one of those whose genius and energy change the fate of empires. He was by nature and habit one of those who follow, not one of those who lead. Nothing that is recorded, either of his words or of his actions, indicates intellectual or moral elevation. But his talents, though not brilliant, were of an eminently useful kind; and his principles, though not inflexible, were not more relaxed than those of his associates and competitors. He had a cool temper, a sound judgement, great powers of application, and a constant eye to the main chance. In his youth he was, it seems, fond of practical jokes. Yet even out of these he contrived to extract some pecuniary profit. When he was studying the law at Gray's Inn, he lost all his furniture and books at the gaming table to one of his friends. He accordingly bored a hole in the wall which separated his chambers from those of his associate, and at midnight bellowed through this passage threats

of damnation and calls to repentance in the ears of the victorious gambler, who lay sweating with fear all night, and refunded his winnings on his knees next day. "Many other the like merry jest," says his old biographer, "I have heard him tell, too long to be here noted." To the last, Burleigh was somewhat jocose; and some of his sportive sayings have been recorded by Bacon. They show much more shrewdness than generosity, and are, indeed, neatly expressed reasons for exacting money rigorously, and for keeping it carefully. It must, however, be acknowledged that he was rigorous and careful for the public advantage as well as for his own. To extol his moral character as Dr. Nares has extolled it is absurd. It would be equally absurd to represent him as a corrupt, rapacious, and bad-hearted man. He paid great attention to the interests of the state, and great attention also to the interest of his own family. He never deserted his friends till it was very inconvenient to stand by them, was an excellent Protestant, when it was not very advantageous to be a Papist, recommended a tolerant policy to his mistress as strongly as he could recommend it without hazarding her favour, never put to the rack any person from whom it did not seem probable that useful information might be derived, and was so moderate in his desires that he left only three hundred distinct landed estates, though he might, as his honest servant assures us, have left much more, "if he would have taken money out of the Exchequer for his own use, as many Treasurers have done."

Burleigh, like the old Marquess of Winchester, who preceded

him in the custody of the White Staff, was of the willow, and not of the oak. He first rose into notice by defending the supremacy of Henry the Eighth. He was subsequently favoured and promoted by the Duke of Somerset. He not only contrived to escape unhurt when his patron fell, but became an important member of the administration of Northumberland. Dr. Nares assures us over and over again that there could have been nothing base in Cecil's conduct on this occasion; for, says he, Cecil continued to stand well with Cranmer. This, we confess, hardly satisfies us. We are much of the mind of Falstaff's tailor. We must have better assurance for Sir John than Bardolph's. We like not the security.

Through the whole course of that miserable intrigue which was carried on round the dying bed of Edward the Sixth, Cecil so demeaned himself as to avoid, first, the displeasure of Northumberland, and afterwards the displeasure of Mary. He was prudently unwilling to put his hand to the instrument which changed the course of the succession. But the furious Dudley was master of the palace. Cecil, therefore, according to his own account, excused himself from signing as a party, but consented to sign as a witness. It is not easy to describe his dexterous conduct at this most perplexing crisis in language more appropriate than that which is employed by old Fuller. "His hand wrote it as secretary of state," says that quaint writer; "but his heart consented not thereto. Yea, he openly opposed it; though at last yielding to the greatness of Northumberland, in an age

when it was present drowning not to swim with the stream. But as the philosopher tells us, that though the planets be whirled about daily from east to west, by the motion of the primum mobile, yet have they also a contrary proper motion of their own from west to east, which they slowly, though surely, move, at their leisure; so Cecil had secret counter-endeavours against the strain of the court herein, and privately advanced his rightful intentions, against the foresaid duke's ambition."

This was undoubtedly the most perilous conjuncture of Cecil's life. Wherever there was a safe course, he was safe. But here every course was full of danger. His situation rendered it impossible for him to be neutral. If he acted on either side, if he refused to act at all, he ran a fearful risk. He saw all the difficulties of his position. He sent his money and plate out of London, made over his estates to his son, and carried arms about his person. His best arms, however, were his sagacity and his self-command. The plot in which he had been an unwilling accomplice ended, as it was natural that so odious and absurd a plot should end, in the ruin of its contrivers. In the meantime, Cecil quietly extricated himself and, having been successively patronised by Henry, by Somerset, and by Northumberland, continued to flourish under the protection of Mary.

He had no aspirations after the crown of martyrdom. He confessed himself, therefore, with great decorum, heard mass in Wimbledon Church at Easter, and, for the better ordering of his spiritual concerns, took a priest into his house. Dr. Nares,

whose simplicity passes that of any casuist with whom we are acquainted, vindicates his hero by assuring us that this was not superstition, but pure unmixed hypocrisy. "That he did in some manner conform, we shall not be able, in the face of existing documents, to deny; while we feel in our own minds abundantly satisfied, that, during this very trying reign, he never abandoned the prospect of another revolution in favour of Protestantism." In another place, the Doctor tells us, that Cecil went to mass "with no idolatrous intention." Nobody, we believe, ever accused him of idolatrous intentions. The very ground of the charge against him is that he had no idolatrous intentions. We never should have blamed him if he had really gone to Wimbledon Church, with the feelings of a good Catholic, to worship the host. Dr. Nares speaks in several places with just severity of the sophistry of the Jesuits, and with just admiration of the incomparable letters of Pascal. It is somewhat strange, therefore, that he should adopt, to the full extent, the jesuitical doctrine of the direction of intentions.

We do not blame Cecil for not choosing to be burned. The deep stain upon his memory is that, for differences of opinion for which he would risk nothing himself, he, in the day of his power, took away without scruple the lives of others. One of the excuses suggested in these Memoirs for his conforming, during the reign of Mary to the Church of Rome, is that he may have been of the same mind with those German Protestants who were called Adiaphorists, and who considered the popish rites as matters indifferent. Melanchthon was one of these moderate persons, and

“appears,” says Dr. Nares, “to have gone greater lengths than any imputed to Lord Burleigh.” We should have thought this not only an excuse, but a complete vindication, if Cecil had been an Adiaphorist for the benefit of others as well as for his own. If the popish rites were matters of so little moment that a good Protestant might lawfully practise them for his safety, how could it be just or humane that a Papist should be hanged, drawn, and quartered, for practising them from a sense of duty? Unhappily these non-essentials soon became matters of life and death just at the very time at which Cecil attained the highest point of power and favour, an Act of Parliament was passed by which the penalties of high treason were denounced against persons who should do in sincerity what he had done from cowardice.

Early in the reign of Mary, Cecil was employed in a mission scarcely consistent with the character of a zealous Protestant. He was sent to escort the Papal Legate, Cardinal Pole, from Brussels to London. That great body of moderate persons who cared more for the quiet of the realm than for the controverted points which were in issue between the Churches seem to have placed their chief hope in the wisdom and humanity of the gentle Cardinal. Cecil, it is clear, cultivated the friendship of Pole with great assiduity, and received great advantage from the Legate’s protection.

But the best protection of Cecil, during the gloomy and disastrous reign of Mary, was that which he derived from his own prudence and from his own temper, a prudence which could

never be lulled into carelessness, a temper which could never be irritated into rashness. The Papists could find no occasion against him. Yet he did not lose the esteem even of those sterner Protestants who had preferred exile to recantation. He attached himself to the persecuted heiress of the throne, and entitled himself to her gratitude and confidence. Yet he continued to receive marks of favour from the Queen. In the House of Commons, he put himself at the head of the party opposed to the Court. Yet, so guarded was his language that, even when some of those who acted with him were imprisoned by the Privy Council, he escaped with impunity.

At length Mary died: Elizabeth succeeded; and Cecil rose at once to greatness. He was sworn in Privy-councillor and Secretary of State to the new sovereign before he left her prison of Hatfield; and he continued to serve her during forty years, without intermission, in the highest employments. His abilities were precisely those which keep men long in power. He belonged to the class of the Walpoles, the Pelhams, and the Liverpools, not to that of the St. Johns, the Carterets, the Chathams, and the Cannings. If he had been a man of original genius and of an enterprising spirit, it would have been scarcely possible for him to keep his power or even his head. There was not room in one government for an Elizabeth and a Richelieu. What the haughty daughter of Henry needed, was a moderate, cautious, flexible minister, skilled in the details of business, competent to advise, but not aspiring to command. And such a minister she found in

Burleigh. No arts could shake the confidence which she reposed in her old and trusty servant. The courtly graces of Leicester, the brilliant talents and accomplishments of Essex, touched the fancy, perhaps the heart, of the woman; but no rival could deprive the Treasurer of the place which he possessed in the favour of the Queen. She sometimes chid him sharply; but he was the man whom she delighted to honour. For Burleigh, she forgot her usual parsimony both of wealth and of dignities. For Burleigh, she relaxed that severe etiquette to which she was unreasonably attached. Every other person to whom she addressed her speech, or on whom the glance of her eagle eye fell, instantly sank on his knee. For Burleigh alone, a chair was set in her presence; and there the old minister, by birth only a plain Lincolnshire esquire, took his ease, while the haughty heirs of the Fitzalans and the De Veres humbled themselves to the dust around him. At length, having, survived all his early coadjutors and rivals, he died full of years and honours. His royal mistress visited him on his deathbed, and cheered him with assurances of her affection and esteem; and his power passed, with little diminution, to a son who inherited his abilities, and whose mind had been formed by his counsels.

The life of Burleigh was commensurate with one of the most important periods in the history of the world. It exactly measures the time during which the House of Austria held decided superiority and aspired to universal dominion. In the year in which Burleigh was born, Charles the Fifth obtained

the imperial crown. In the year in which Burleigh died, the vast designs which had, during near a century, kept Europe in constant agitation, were buried in the same grave with the proud and sullen Philip.

The life of Burleigh was commensurate also with the period during which a great moral revolution was effected, a revolution the consequences of which were felt, not only in the cabinets of princes, but at half the firesides in Christendom. He was born when the great religious schism was just commencing. He lived to see that schism complete, and to see a line of demarcation, which, since his death, has been very little altered, strongly drawn between Protestant and Catholic Europe.

The only event of modern times which can be properly compared with the Reformation is the French Revolution, or, to speak more accurately, that great revolution of political feeling which took place in almost every part of the civilised world during the eighteenth century, and which obtained in France its most terrible and signal triumph. Each of these memorable events may be described as a rising up of the human reason against a Caste. The one was a struggle of the laity against the clergy for intellectual liberty; the other was a struggle of the people against princes and nobles for political liberty. In both cases, the spirit of innovation was at first encouraged by the class to which it was likely to be most prejudicial. It was under the patronage of Frederic, of Catherine, of Joseph, and of the grandees of France, that the philosophy which

afterwards threatened all the thrones and aristocracies of Europe with destruction first became formidable. The ardour with which men betook themselves to liberal studies, at the close of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, was zealously encouraged by the heads of that very church to which liberal studies were destined to be fatal. In both cases, when the explosion came, it came with a violence which appalled and disgusted many of those who had previously been distinguished by the freedom of their opinions. The violence of the democratic party in France made Burke a Tory and Alfieri a courtier. The violence of the chiefs of the German schism made Erasmus a defender of abuses, and turned the author of Utopia into a persecutor. In both cases, the convulsion which had overthrown deeply seated errors, shook all the principles on which society rests to their very foundations. The minds of men were unsettled. It seemed for a time that all order and morality were about to perish with the prejudices with which they had been long and intimately associated. Frightful cruelties were committed. Immense masses of property were confiscated. Every part of Europe swarmed with exiles. In moody and turbulent spirits zeal soured into malignity, or foamed into madness. From the political agitation of the eighteenth century sprang the Jacobins. From the religious agitation of the sixteenth century sprang the Anabaptists. The partisans of Robespierre robbed and murdered in the name of fraternity and equality. The followers of Kniperdoling robbed and murdered in the name of Christian

liberty. The feeling of patriotism was in many parts of Europe, almost wholly extinguished. All the old maxims of foreign policy were changed. Physical boundaries were superseded by moral boundaries. Nations made war on each other with new arms, with arms which no fortifications, however strong by nature or by art, could resist, with arms before which rivers parted like the Jordan, and ramparts fell down like the walls of Jericho. The great masters of fleets and armies were often reduced to confess, like Milton's warlike angel, how hard they found it

”—To exclude Spiritual substance with corporeal bar.”

Europe was divided, as Greece had been divided during the period concerning which Thucydides wrote. The conflict was not, as it is in ordinary times, between state and state, but between two omnipresent factions, each of which was in some places dominant and in other places oppressed, but which, openly or covertly, carried on their strife in the bosom of every society. No man asked whether another belonged to the same country with himself, but whether he belonged to the same sect. Party-spirit seemed to justify and consecrate acts which, in any other times, would have been considered as the foulest of treasons. The French emigrant saw nothing disgraceful in bringing Austrian and Prussian hussars to Paris. The Irish or Italian democrat saw no impropriety in serving the French Directory against his own native government. So, in the sixteenth century, the

fury of theological factions suspended all national animosities and jealousies. The Spaniards were invited into France by the League; the English were invited into France by the Huguenots.

We by no means intend to underrate or to palliate the crimes and excesses which, during the last generation, were produced by the spirit of democracy. But, when we hear men zealous for the Protestant religion, constantly represent the French Revolution as radically and essentially evil on account of those crimes and excesses, we cannot but remember that the deliverance of our ancestors from the house of their spiritual bondage was effected “by plagues and by signs, by wonders and by war.” We cannot but remember that, as in the case of the French Revolution, so also in the case of the Reformation, those who rose up against tyranny were themselves deeply tainted with the vices which tyranny engenders. We cannot but remember that libels scarcely less scandalous than those of Hebert, mummeries scarcely less absurd than those of Cloutz, and crimes scarcely less atrocious than those of Marat, disgrace the early history of Protestantism. The Reformation is an event long past. That volcano has spent its rage. The wide waste produced by its outbreak is forgotten. The landmarks which were swept away have been replaced. The ruined edifices have been repaired. The lava has covered with a rich incrustation the fields which it once devastated, and, after having turned a beautiful and fruitful garden into a desert, has again turned the desert into a still more beautiful and fruitful garden. The second great eruption is not yet over. The marks of

its ravages are still all around us. The ashes are still hot beneath our feet. In some directions the deluge of fire still continues to spread. Yet experience surely entitles us to believe that this explosion, like that which preceded it, will fertilise the soil which it has devastated. Already, in those parts which have suffered most severely, rich cultivation and secure dwellings have begun to appear amidst the waste. The more we read of the history of past ages, the more we observe the signs of our own times, the more do we feel our hearts filled and swelled up by a good hope for the future destinies of the human race.

The history of the Reformation in England is full of strange problems. The most prominent and extraordinary phaenomenon which it presents to us is the gigantic strength of the government contrasted with the feebleness of the religious parties. During the twelve or thirteen years which followed the death of Henry the Eighth, the religion of the state was thrice changed. Protestantism was established by Edward; the Catholic Church was restored by Mary; Protestantism was again established by Elizabeth. The faith of the nation seemed to depend on the personal inclinations of the sovereign. Nor was this all. An established church was then, as a matter of course, a persecuting church. Edward persecuted Catholics. Mary persecuted Protestants. Elizabeth persecuted Catholics again. The father of those three sovereigns had enjoyed the pleasure of persecuting both sects at once, and had sent to death, on the same hurdle, the heretic who denied the real presence, and

the traitor who denied the royal supremacy. There was nothing in England like that fierce and bloody opposition which, in France, each of the religious factions in its turn offered to the government. We had neither a Coligny nor a Mayenne, neither a Moncontour nor an Ivry. No English city braved sword and famine for the reformed doctrines with the spirit of Rochelle, or for the Catholic doctrines with the spirit of Paris. Neither sect in England formed a League. Neither sect extorted a recantation from the sovereign. Neither sect could obtain from an adverse sovereign even a toleration. The English Protestants, after several years of domination, sank down with scarcely a struggle under the tyranny of Mary. The Catholics, after having regained and abused their old ascendancy submitted patiently to the severe rule of Elizabeth. Neither Protestants nor Catholics engaged in any great and well-organized scheme of resistance. A few wild and tumultuous risings, suppressed as soon as they appeared, a few dark conspiracies in which only a small number of desperate men engaged, such were the utmost efforts made by these two parties to assert the most sacred of human rights, attacked by the most odious tyranny.

The explanation of these circumstances which has generally been given is very simple but by no means satisfactory. The power of the crown, it is said, was then at its height, and was in fact despotic. This solution, we own, seems to us to be no solution at all. It has long been the fashion, a fashion introduced by Mr. Hume, to describe the English monarchy

in the sixteenth century as an absolute monarchy. And such undoubtedly it appears to a superficial observer. Elizabeth, it is true, often spoke to her parliaments in language as haughty and imperious as that which the Great Turk would use to his divan. She punished with great severity members of the House of Commons who, in her opinion, carried the freedom of debate too far. She assumed the power of legislating by means of proclamations. She imprisoned her subjects without bringing them to a legal trial. Torture was often employed, in defiance of the laws of England, for the purpose of extorting confessions from those who were shut up in her dungeons. The authority of the Star-Chamber and of the Ecclesiastical Commission was at its highest point. Severe restraints were imposed on political and religious discussion. The number of presses was at one time limited. No man could print without a licence; and every work had to undergo the scrutiny of the Primate, or the Bishop of London. Persons whose writings were displeasing to the Court, were cruelly mutilated, like Stubbs, or put to death, like Penry. Nonconformity was severely punished. The Queen prescribed the exact rule of religious faith and discipline; and whoever departed from that rule, either to the right or to the left, was in danger of severe penalties.

Such was this government. Yet we know that it was loved by the great body of those who lived under it. We know that, during the fierce contests of the seventeenth century, both the hostile parties spoke of the time of Elizabeth as of a golden age. That

great Queen has now been lying two hundred and thirty years in Henry the Seventh's chapel. Yet her memory is still dear to the hearts of a free people.

The truth seems to be that the government of the Tudors was, with a few occasional deviations, a popular government, under the forms of despotism. At first sight, it may seem that the prerogatives of Elizabeth were not less ample than those of Lewis the Fourteenth, and her parliaments were as obsequious as his parliaments, that her warrant had as much authority as his *lettre de cachet*. The extravagance with which her courtiers eulogized her personal and mental charms went beyond the adulation of Boileau and Moliere. Lewis would have blushed to receive from those who composed the gorgeous circles of Marli and Versailles such outward marks of servitude as the haughty Britoness exacted of all who approached her. But the authority of Lewis rested on the support of his army. The authority of Elizabeth rested solely on the support of her people. Those who say that her power was absolute do not sufficiently consider in what her power consisted. Her power consisted in the willing obedience of her subjects, in their attachment to her person and to her office, in their respect for the old line from which she sprang, in their sense of the general security which they enjoyed under her government. These were the means, and the only means, which she had at her command for carrying her decrees into execution, for resisting foreign enemies, and for crushing domestic treason. There was not a ward in the city,

there was not a hundred in any shire in England, which could not have overpowered the handful of armed men who composed her household. If a hostile sovereign threatened invasion, if an ambitious noble raised the standard of revolt, she could have recourse only to the trainbands of her capital and the array of her counties, to the citizens and yeomen of England, commanded by the merchants and esquires of England.

Thus, when intelligence arrived of the vast preparations which Philip was making for the subjugation of the realm, the first person to whom the government thought of applying for assistance was the Lord Mayor of London. They sent to ask him what force the city would engage to furnish for the defence of the kingdom against the Spaniards. The Mayor and Common Council, in return desired to know what force the Queen's Highness wished them to furnish. The answer was, fifteen ships, and five thousand men. The Londoners deliberated on the matter, and, two days after, "humbly intreated the council, in sign of their perfect love and loyalty to prince and country, to accept ten thousand men, and thirty ships amply furnished."

People who could give such signs as these of their loyalty were by no means to be misgoverned with impunity. The English in the sixteenth century were, beyond all doubt, a free people. They had not, indeed, the outward show of freedom; but they had the reality. They had not as good a constitution as we have; but they had that without which the best constitution is as useless as the king's proclamation against vice and immorality,

that which, without any constitution, keeps rulers in awe, force, and the spirit to use it. Parliaments, it is true, were rarely held, and were not very respectfully treated. The great charter was often violated. But the people had a security against gross and systematic misgovernment, far stronger than all the parchment that was ever marked with the sign-manual, and than all the wax that was ever pressed by the great seal.

It is a common error in politics to confound means with ends. Constitutions, charters, petitions of right, declarations of right, representative assemblies, electoral colleges, are not good government; nor do they, even when most elaborately constructed, necessarily produce good government. Laws exist in vain for those who have not the courage and the means to defend them. Electors meet in vain where want makes them the slaves of the landlord, or where superstition makes them the slaves of the priest. Representative assemblies sit in vain unless they have at their command, in the last resort the physical power which is necessary to make their deliberations free, and their votes effectual.

The Irish are better represented in parliament than the Scotch, who indeed are not represented at all. But are the Irish better governed than the Scotch? Surely not. This circumstance has of late been used as an argument against reform. It proves nothing against reform. It proves only this, that laws have no magical, no supernatural, virtue; that laws do not act like Aladdin's lamp or Prince Ahmed's apple; that priestcraft, that ignorance, that

the rage of contending factions, may make good institutions useless; that intelligence, sobriety, industry, moral freedom, firm union, may supply in a great measure the defects of the worst representative system. A people whose education and habits are such that, in every quarter of the world they rise above the mass of those with whom they mix, as surely as oil rises to the top of water, a people of such temper and self-government that the wildest popular excesses recorded in their history partake of the gravity of judicial proceedings, and of the solemnity of religious rites, a people whose national pride and mutual attachment have passed into a proverb, a people whose high and fierce spirit, so forcibly described in the haughty motto which encircles their thistle, preserved their independence, during a struggle of centuries, from the encroachments of wealthier and more powerful neighbours, such a people cannot be long oppressed. Any government, however constituted, must respect their wishes and tremble at their discontents. It is indeed most desirable that such a people should exercise a direct influence on the conduct of affairs, and should make their wishes known through constitutional organs. But some influence, direct or indirect, they will assuredly possess. Some organ, constitutional or unconstitutional, they will assuredly find. They will be better governed under a good constitution than under a bad constitution. But they will be better governed under the worst constitution than some other nations under the best. In any general classification of constitutions, the constitution of Scotland must be reckoned

as one of the worst, perhaps as the worst, in Christian Europe. Yet the Scotch are not ill governed. And the reason is simply that they will not bear to be ill governed.

In some of the Oriental monarchies, in Afghanistan for example, though there exists nothing which an European publicist would call a Constitution, the sovereign generally governs in conformity with certain rules established for the public benefit; and the sanction of those rules is, that every Afghan approves them, and that every Afghan is a soldier.

The monarchy of England in the sixteenth century was a monarchy of this kind. It is called an absolute monarchy, because little respect was paid by the Tudors to those institutions which we have been accustomed to consider as the sole checks on the power of the sovereign. A modern Englishman can hardly understand how the people can have had any real security for good government under kings who levied benevolences, and chid the House of Commons as they would have chid a pack of dogs. People do not sufficiently consider that, though the legal checks were feeble, the natural checks were strong. There was one great and effectual limitation on the royal authority, the knowledge that, if the patience of the nation were severely tried, the nation would put forth its strength, and that its strength would be found irresistible. If a large body of Englishmen became thoroughly discontented, instead of presenting requisitions, holding large meetings, passing resolutions, signing petitions, forming associations and unions, they rose up; they took their

halberds and their bows; and, if the sovereign was not sufficiently popular to find among his subjects other halberds and other bows to oppose to the rebels, nothing remained for him but a repetition of the horrible scenes of Berkeley and Pomfret, He had no regular army which could, by its superior arms and its superior skill, overawe or vanquish the sturdy Commons of his realm, abounding in the native hardihood of Englishmen, and trained in the simple discipline of the militia.

It has been said that the Tudors were as absolute as the Caesars. Never was parallel so unfortunate. The government of the Tudors was the direct opposite to the government of Augustus and his successors. The Caesars ruled despotically, by means of a great standing army, under the decent forms of a republican constitution. They called themselves citizens. They mixed unceremoniously with other citizens. In theory they were only the elective magistrates of a free commonwealth. Instead of arrogating to themselves despotic power, they acknowledged allegiance to the senate. They were merely the lieutenants of that venerable body. They mixed in debate. They even appeared as advocates before the courts of law. Yet they could safely indulge in the wildest freaks of cruelty and rapacity, while their legions remained faithful. Our Tudors, on the other hand, under the titles and forms of monarchical supremacy, were essentially popular magistrates. They had no means of protecting themselves against the public hatred; and they were therefore compelled to court the public favour. To enjoy all the state and

all the personal indulgences of absolute power, to be adored with Oriental prostrations, to dispose at will of the liberty and even of the life of ministers and courtiers, this nation granted to the Tudors. But the condition on which they were suffered to be the tyrants of Whitehall was that they should be the mild and paternal sovereigns of England. They were under the same restraints with regard to their people under which a military despot is placed with regard to his army. They would have found it as dangerous to grind their subjects with cruel taxation as Nero would have found it to leave his praetorians unpaid. Those who immediately surrounded the royal person, and engaged in the hazardous game of ambition, were exposed to the most fearful dangers. Buckingham, Cromwell, Surrey, Seymour of Sudeley, Somerset, Northumberland, Suffolk, Norfolk, Essex, perished on the scaffold. But in general the country gentleman hunted and the merchant traded in peace. Even Henry, as cruel as Domitian, but far more politic, contrived, while reeking with the blood of the Lamiae, to be a favourite with the cobblers.

The Tudors committed very tyrannical acts. But in their ordinary dealings with the people they were not, and could not safely be, tyrants. Some excesses were easily pardoned. For the nation was proud of the high and fiery blood of its magnificent princes, and saw in many proceedings which a lawyer would even then have condemned, the outbreak of the same noble spirit which so manfully hurled foul scorn at Parma and at Spain. But to this endurance there was a limit. If the

government ventured to adopt measures which the people really felt to be oppressive, it was soon compelled to change its course. When Henry the Eighth attempted to raise a forced loan of unusual amount by proceedings of unusual rigour, the opposition which he encountered was such as appalled even his stubborn and imperious spirit. The people, we are told, said that, if they were treated thus, "then were it worse than the taxes Of France; and England should be bond, and not free." The county of Suffolk rose in arms. The king prudently yielded to an opposition which, if he had persisted, would, in all probability, have taken the form of a general rebellion. Towards the close of the reign of Elizabeth, the people felt themselves aggrieved by the monopolies. The Queen, proud and courageous as she was, shrank from a contest with the nation, and, with admirable sagacity, conceded all that her subjects had demanded, while it was yet in her power to concede with dignity and grace.

It cannot be imagined that a people who had in their own hands the means of checking their princes would suffer any prince to impose upon them a religion generally detested. It is absurd to suppose that, if the nation had been decidedly attached to the Protestant faith, Mary could have re-established the Papal supremacy. It is equally absurd to suppose that, if the nation had been zealous for the ancient religion, Elizabeth could have restored the Protestant Church. The truth is, that the people were not disposed to engage in a struggle either for the new or for the old doctrines. Abundance of spirit was shown when

it seemed likely that Mary would resume her father's grants of church property, or that she would sacrifice the interests of England to the husband whom she regarded with unmerited tenderness. That queen found that it would be madness to attempt the restoration of the abbey lands. She found that her subjects would never suffer her to make her hereditary kingdom a fief of Castile. On these points she encountered a steady resistance, and was compelled to give way. If she was able to establish the Catholic worship and to persecute those who would not conform to it, it was evidently because the people cared far less for the Protestant religion than for the rights of property and for the independence of the English crown. In plain words, they did not think the difference between the hostile sects worth a struggle. There was undoubtedly a zealous Protestant party and a zealous Catholic party. But both these parties were, we believe, very small. We doubt, whether both together made up, at the time of Mary's death, the twentieth part of the nation. The remaining nineteen twentieths halted between the two opinions, and were not disposed to risk a revolution in the government, for the purpose of giving to either of the extreme factions an advantage over the other.

We possess no data which will enable us to compare with exactness the force of the two sects. Mr. Butler asserts that, even at the accession of James the First, a majority of the population of England were Catholics. This is pure assertion; and is not only unsupported by evidence, but, we think, completely disproved

by the strongest evidence. Dr. Lingard is of opinion that the Catholics were one-half of the nation in the middle of the reign of Elizabeth. Rushton says that, when Elizabeth came to the throne, the Catholics were two-thirds of the nation, and the Protestants only one-third. The most judicious and impartial of English historians, Mr. Hallam, is, on the contrary, of opinion, that two-thirds were Protestants and only one-third Catholics. To us, we must confess, it seems, incredible that, if the Protestants were really two to one, they should have borne the government of Mary, or that, if the Catholics were really two to one, they should have borne the government of Elizabeth. We are at a loss to conceive how a sovereign who has no standing army, and whose power rests solely on the loyalty of his subjects, can continue for years to persecute a religion to which the majority of his subjects are sincerely attached. In fact, the Protestants did rise up against one sister, and the Catholics against the other. Those risings clearly showed how small and feeble both the parties were. Both in the one case and in the other the nation ranged itself on the side of the government, and the insurgents were speedily put down and punished. The Kentish gentlemen who took up arms for the reformed doctrines against Mary, and the great Northern Earls who displayed the banner of the Five Wounds against Elizabeth, were alike considered by the great body of their countrymen as wicked disturbers of the public peace.

The account which Cardinal Bentivoglio gave of the state of religion in England well deserves consideration. The zealous

Catholics he reckoned at one-thirtieth part of the nation. The people who would without the least scruple become Catholics, if the Catholic religion were established, he estimated at four-fifths of the nation. We believe this account to have been very near the truth. We believe that people, whose minds were made up on either side, who were inclined to make any sacrifice or run any risk for either religion, were very few. Each side had a few enterprising champions, and a few stout-hearted martyrs; but the nation, undetermined in its opinions and feelings, resigned itself implicitly to the guidance of the government, and lent to the sovereign for the time being an equally ready aid against either of the extreme parties.

We are very far from saying that the English of that generation were irreligious. They held firmly those doctrines which are common to the Catholic and to the Protestant theology. But they had no fixed opinion as to the matters in dispute between the churches. They were in a situation resembling that of those Borderers whom Sir Walter Scott has described with so much spirit,

“Who sought the beeves that made their broth In England and in Scotland both.”

And who

“Nine times outlawed had been By England’s king and Scotland’s queen.”

They were sometimes Protestants, sometimes Catholics; sometimes half Protestants half Catholics.

The English had not, for ages, been bigoted Papists. In the fourteenth century, the first and perhaps the greatest of the reformers, John Wicliffe, had stirred the public mind to its inmost depths. During the same century, a scandalous schism in the Catholic Church had diminished, in many parts of Europe, the reverence in which the Roman pontiffs were held. It is clear that, a hundred years before the time of Luther, a great party in this kingdom was eager for a change at least as extensive as that which was subsequently effected by Henry the Eighth. The House of Commons, in the reign of Henry the Fourth, proposed a confiscation of ecclesiastical property, more sweeping and violent even than that which took place under the administration of Thomas Cromwell; and, though defeated in this attempt, they succeeded in depriving the clerical order of some of its most oppressive privileges. The splendid conquests of Henry the Fifth turned the attention of the nation from domestic reform. The Council of Constance removed some of the grossest of those scandals which had deprived the Church of the public respect. The authority of that venerable synod propped up the sinking authority of the Popedom. A considerable reaction took place. It cannot, however, be doubted, that there was still some concealed Lollardism in England; or that many who did not absolutely dissent from any doctrine held by the Church of Rome were jealous of the wealth and power enjoyed by her ministers. At the very beginning of the reign of Henry the Eighth, a struggle took place between the clergy and the courts of law, in which

the courts of law remained victorious. One of the bishops, on that occasion, declared that the common people entertained the strongest prejudices against his order, and that a clergyman had no chance of fair play before a lay tribunal. The London juries, he said, entertained such a spite to the Church that, if Abel were a priest, they would find him guilty of the murder of Cain. This was said a few months before the time when Martin Luther began to preach at Wittenburg against indulgences.

As the Reformation did not find the English bigoted Papists, so neither was it conducted in such a manner as to make them zealous Protestants. It was not under the direction of men like that fiery Saxon who swore that he would go to Worms, though he had to face as many devils as there were tiles on the houses, or like that brave Switzer who was struck down while praying in front of the ranks of Zurich. No preacher of religion had the same power here which Calvin had at Geneva and Knox in Scotland. The government put itself early at the head of the movement, and thus acquired power to regulate, and occasionally to arrest, the movement.

To many persons it appears extraordinary that Henry the Eighth should have been able to maintain himself so long in an intermediate position between the Catholic and Protestant parties. Most extraordinary it would indeed be, if we were to suppose that the nation consisted of none but decided Catholics and decided Protestants. The fact is that the great mass of the people was neither Catholic nor Protestant, but was, like its

sovereign, midway between the two sects. Henry, in that very part of his conduct which has been represented as most capricious and inconsistent, was probably following a policy far more pleasing to the majority of his subjects than a policy like that of Edward, or a policy like that of Mary, would have been. Down even to the very close of the reign of Elizabeth, the people were in a state somewhat resembling that in which, as Machiavelli says, the inhabitants of the Roman empire were, during the transition from heathenism to Christianity; “sendo la maggior parte di loro incerti a quale Dio dovessero ricorrere.” They were generally, we think, favourable to the royal supremacy. They disliked the policy of the Court of Rome. Their spirit rose against the interference of a foreign priest with their national concerns. The bull which pronounced sentence of deposition against Elizabeth, the plots which were formed against her life, the usurpation of her titles by the Queen of Scotland, the hostility of Philip, excited their strongest indignation. The cruelties of Bonner were remembered with disgust. Some parts of the new system, the use of the English language, for example, in public worship, and the communion in both kinds, were undoubtedly popular. On the other hand, the early lessons of the nurse and the priest were not forgotten. The ancient ceremonies were long remembered with affectionate reverence. A large portion of the ancient theology lingered to the last in the minds which had been imbued with it in childhood.

The best proof that the religion of the people was of this mixed kind is furnished by the Drama of that age. No man would

bring unpopular opinions prominently forward in a play intended for representation. And we may safely conclude, that feelings and opinions which pervade the whole Dramatic Literature of a generation, are feelings and opinions of which the men of that generation generally partook.

The greatest and most popular dramatists of the Elizabethan age treat religious subjects in a very remarkable manner. They speak respectfully of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. But they speak neither like Catholics nor like Protestants, but like persons who are wavering between the two systems, or who have made a system for themselves out of parts selected from both. They seem to hold some of the Romish rites and doctrines in high respect. They treat the vow of celibacy, for example, so tempting, and, in later times, so common a subject for ribaldry, with mysterious reverence. Almost every member of a religious order whom they introduce is a holy and venerable man. We remember in their plays nothing resembling the coarse ridicule with which the Catholic religion and its ministers were assailed, two generations later, by dramatists who wished to please the multitude. We remember no Friar Dominic, no Father Foigard, among the characters drawn by those great poets. The scene at the close of the Knight of Malta might have been written by a fervent Catholic. Massinger shows a great fondness for ecclesiastics of the Romish Church, and has even gone so far as to bring a virtuous and interesting Jesuit on the stage. Ford, in that fine play which it is painful to read and scarcely decent to

name, assigns a highly creditable part to the Friar. The partiality of Shakspeare for Friars is well known. In Hamlet, the Ghost complains that he died without extreme unction, and, in defiance of the article which condemns the doctrine of purgatory, declares that he is

“Confined to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes, done in his days of nature,
Are burnt and purged away.”

These lines, we suspect, would have raised a tremendous storm in the theatre at any time during the reign of Charles the Second. They were clearly not written by a zealous Protestant, or for zealous Protestants. Yet the author of King John and Henry the Eighth was surely no friend to papal supremacy.

There is, we think, only one solution of the phaenomena which we find in the history and in the drama of that age. The religion of the English was a mixed religion, like that of the Samaritan settlers, described in the second book of Kings, who “feared the Lord, and served their graven images”; like that of the Judaizing Christians who blended the ceremonies and doctrines of the synagogue with those of the church; like that of the Mexican Indians, who, during many generations after the subjugation of their race, continued to unite with the rites learned from their conquerors the worship of the grotesque idols which had been adored by Montezuma and Guatemozin.

These feelings were not confined to the populace. Elizabeth

herself was by no means exempt from them. A crucifix, with wax-lights burning round it, stood in her private chapel. She always spoke with disgust and anger of the marriage of priests. "I was in horror," says Archbishop Parker, "to hear such words to come from her mild nature and Christian learned conscience, as she spake concerning God's holy ordinance and institution of matrimony." Burleigh prevailed on her to connive at the marriages of churchmen. But she would only connive; and the children sprung from such marriages were illegitimate till the accession of James the First.

That which is, as we have said, the great stain on the character of Burleigh is also the great stain on the character of Elizabeth. Being herself an Adiaphorist, having no scruple about conforming to the Romish Church when conformity was necessary to her own safety, retaining to the last moment of her life a fondness for much of the doctrine and much of the ceremonial of that church, yet she subjected that church to a persecution even more odious than the persecution with which her sister had harassed the Protestants. We say more odious. For Mary had at least the plea of fanaticism. She did nothing for her religion which she was not prepared to suffer for it. She had held it firmly under persecution. She fully believed it to be essential to salvation. If she burned the bodies of her subjects, it was in order to rescue their souls. Elizabeth had no such pretext. In opinion, she was little more than half a Protestant. She had professed, when it suited her, to be wholly a Catholic. There is an excuse, a

wretched excuse, for the massacres of Piedmont and the Autos da fe of Spain. But what can be said in defence of a ruler who is at once indifferent and intolerant?

If the great Queen, whose memory is still held in just veneration by Englishmen, had possessed sufficient virtue and sufficient enlargement of mind to adopt those principles which More, wiser in speculation than in action, had avowed in the preceding generation, and by which the excellent L'Hospital regulated his conduct in her own time, how different would be the colour of the whole history of the last two hundred and fifty years! She had the happiest opportunity ever vouchsafed to any sovereign of establishing perfect freedom of conscience throughout her dominions, without danger to her government, without scandal to any large party among her subjects. The nation, as it was clearly ready to profess either religion, would, beyond all doubt, have been ready to tolerate both. Unhappily for her own glory and for the public peace, she adopted a policy from the effects of which the empire is still suffering. The yoke of the Established Church was pressed down on the people till they would bear it no longer. Then a reaction came. Another reaction followed. To the tyranny of the establishment succeeded the tumultuous conflict of sects, infuriated by manifold wrongs, and drunk with unwonted freedom. To the conflict of sects succeeded again the cruel domination of one persecuting church. At length oppression put off its most horrible form, and took a milder aspect. The penal laws which had been framed for

the protection of the established church were abolished. But exclusions and disabilities still remained. These exclusions and disabilities, after having generated the most fearful discontents, after having rendered all government in one part of the kingdom impossible, after having brought the state to the very brink of ruin, have, in our times, been removed, but, though removed have left behind them a rankling which may last for many years. It is melancholy to think with what case Elizabeth might have united all conflicting sects under the shelter of the same impartial laws and the same paternal throne, and thus have placed the nation in the same situation, as far as the rights of conscience are concerned, in which we at last stand, after all the heart-burnings, the persecutions, the conspiracies, the seditions, the revolutions, the judicial murders, the civil wars, of ten generations.

This is the dark side of her character. Yet she surely was a great woman. Of all the sovereigns who exercised a power which was seemingly absolute, but which in fact depended for support on the love and confidence of their subjects, she was by far the most illustrious. It has often been alleged as an excuse for the misgovernment of her successors that they only followed her example, that precedents might be found in the transactions of her reign for persecuting the Puritans, for levying money without the sanction of the House of Commons, for confining men without bringing them to trial, for interfering with the liberty of parliamentary debate. All this may be true. But it is no good plea for her successors; and for this plain reason, that they were her

successors. She governed one generation, they governed another; and between the two generations there was almost as little in common as between the people of two different countries. It was not by looking at the particular measures which Elizabeth had adopted, but by looking at the great general principles of her government, that those who followed her were likely to learn the art of managing untractable subjects. If, instead of searching the records of her reign for precedents which might seem to vindicate the mutilation of Prynne and the imprisonment of Eliot, the Stuarts had attempted to discover the fundamental rules which guided her conduct in all her dealings with her people, they would have perceived that their policy was then most unlike to hers, when to a superficial observer it would have seemed most to resemble hers. Firm, haughty, sometimes unjust and cruel, in her proceedings towards individuals or towards small parties, she avoided with care, or retracted with speed, every measure which seemed likely to alienate the great mass of the people. She gained more honour and more love by the manner in which she repaired her errors than she would have gained by never committing errors. If such a man as Charles the First had been in her place when the whole nation was crying out against the monopolies, he would have refused all redress. He would have dissolved the Parliament, and imprisoned the most popular members. He would have called another Parliament. He would have given some vague and delusive promises of relief in return for subsidies. When entreated to fulfil his promises, he

would have again dissolved the Parliament, and again imprisoned his leading opponents. The country would have become more agitated than before. The next House of Commons would have been more unmanageable than that which preceded it. The tyrant would have agreed to all that the nation demanded. He would have solemnly ratified an act abolishing monopolies for ever. He would have received a large supply in return for this concession; and within half a year new patents, more oppressive than those which had been cancelled, would have been issued by scores. Such was the policy which brought the heir of a long line of kings, in early youth the darling of his countrymen, to a prison and a scaffold.

Elizabeth, before the House of Commons could address her, took out of their mouths the words which they were about to utter in the name of the nation. Her promises went beyond their desires. Her performance followed close upon her promise. She did not treat the nation as an adverse party, as a party which had an interest opposed to hers, as a party to which she was to grant as few advantages as possible, and from which she was to extort as much money as possible. Her benefits were given, not sold; and, when once given, they were never withdrawn. She gave them too with a frankness, an effusion of heart, a princely dignity, a motherly tenderness, which enhanced their value. They were received by the sturdy country gentlemen who had come up to Westminster full of resentment, with tears of joy, and shouts of "God save the Queen." Charles the First gave up half the

prerogatives of his crown to the Commons; and the Commons sent him in return the Grand Remonstrance.

We had intended to say something concerning that illustrious group of which Elizabeth is the central figure, that group which the last of the bards saw in vision from the top of Snowdon, encircling the Virgin Queen,

“Many a baron bold,
And gorgeous dames and statesmen old
In bearded majesty.”

We had intended to say something concerning the dexterous Walsingham, the impetuous Oxford, the graceful Sackville, the all-accomplished Sydney; concerning Essex, the ornament of the court and of the camp, the model of chivalry, the munificent patron of genius, whom great virtues, great courage, great talents, the favour of his sovereign, the love of his countrymen, all that seemed to ensure a happy and glorious life, led to an early and an ignominious death, concerning Raleigh, the soldier, the sailor, the scholar, the courtier, the orator, the poet, the historian, the philosopher, whom we picture to ourselves, sometimes reviewing the Queen's guard, sometimes giving chase to a Spanish galleon, then answering the chiefs of the country party in the House of Commons, then again murmuring one of his sweet love-songs too near the ears of her Highness's maids of honour, and soon after poring over the Talmud, or collating Polybius with Livy. We had intended also to say something concerning the

literature of that splendid period, and especially concerning those two incomparable men, the Prince of Poets, and the Prince of Philosophers, who have made the Elizabethan age a more glorious and important era in the history of the human mind than the age of Pericles, of Augustus, or of Leo. But subjects so vast require a space far larger than we can at present afford. We therefore stop here, fearing that, if we proceed, our article may swell to a bulk exceeding that of all other reviews, as much as Dr. Nares's book exceeds the bulk of all other histories.

JOHN HAMPDEN

(December 1831) Some Memorials of John Hampden, his Party, and his Times. By LORD NUGENT. Two vols. 8vo. London: 1831.

WE have read this book with great pleasure, though not exactly with that kind of pleasure which we had expected. We had hoped that Lord Nugent would have been able to collect, from family papers and local traditions, much new and interesting information respecting the life and character of the renowned leader of the Long Parliament, the first of those great English commoners whose plain addition of Mister has, to our ears, a more majestic sound than the proudest of the feudal titles. In this hope we have been disappointed; but assuredly not from any want of zeal or diligence on the part of the noble biographer. Even at Hampden, there are, it seems, no important papers relating to the most illustrious proprietor of that ancient domain. The most valuable memorials of him which still exist, belong to the family of his friend Sir John Eliot. Lord Eliot has furnished the portrait which is engraved for this work, together with some very interesting letters. The portrait is undoubtedly an original, and probably the only original now in existence. The intellectual forehead, the mild penetration of the eye, and the inflexible resolution expressed by the lines of the mouth, sufficiently guarantee the likeness. We shall probably make

some extracts from the letters. They contain almost all the new information that Lord Nugent has been able to procure respecting the private pursuits of the great man whose memory he worships with an enthusiastic, but not extravagant veneration.

The public life of Hampden is surrounded by no obscurity. His history, more particularly from the year 1640 to his death, is the history of England. These Memoirs must be considered as Memoirs of the history of England; and, as such, they well deserve to be attentively perused. They contain some curious facts which, to us at least, are new, much spirited narrative, many judicious remarks, and much eloquent declamation.

We are not sure that even the want of information respecting the private character of Hampden is not in itself a circumstance as strikingly characteristic as any which the most minute chronicler, O'Meara, Mrs. Thrale, or Boswell himself, ever recorded concerning their heroes. The celebrated Puritan leader is an almost solitary instance of a great man who neither sought nor shunned greatness, who found glory only because glory lay in the plain path of duty. During more than forty years he was known to his country neighbours as a gentleman of cultivated mind, of high principles, of polished address, happy in his family, and active in the discharge of local duties; and to political men as an honest, industrious, and sensible member of Parliament, not eager to display his talents, stanch to his party and attentive to the interests of his constituents. A great and terrible crisis came. A direct attack was made by an arbitrary government on a sacred

right of Englishmen, on a right which was the chief security for all their other rights. The nation looked round for a defender. Calmly and unostentatiously the plain Buckinghamshire Esquire placed himself at the head of his countrymen, and right before the face and across the path of tyranny. The times grew darker and more troubled. Public service, perilous, arduous, delicate, was required, and to every service the intellect and the courage of this wonderful man were found fully equal. He became a debater of the first order, a most dexterous manager of the House of Commons, a negotiator, a soldier. He governed a fierce and turbulent assembly, abounding in able men, as easily as he had governed his family. He showed himself as competent to direct a campaign as to conduct the business of the petty sessions. We can scarcely express the admiration which we feel for a mind so great, and, at the same time, so healthful and so well proportioned, so willingly contracting itself to the humblest duties, so easily expanding itself to the highest, so contented in repose, so powerful in action. Almost every part of this virtuous and blameless life which is not hidden from us in modest privacy is a precious and splendid portion of our national history. Had the private conduct of Hampden afforded the slightest pretence for censure, he would have been assailed by the same blind malevolence which, in defiance of the clearest proofs, still continues to call Sir John Eliot an assassin. Had there been even any weak part in the character of Hampden, had his manners been in any respect open to ridicule, we may be sure

that no mercy would have been shown to him by the writers of Charles's faction. Those writers have carefully preserved every little circumstance which could tend to make their opponents odious or contemptible. They have made themselves merry with the cant of injudicious zealots. They have told us that Pym broke down in speech, that Ireton had his nose pulled by Hollis, that the Earl of Northumberland cudgelled Henry Martin, that St. John's manners were sullen, that Vane had an ugly face, that Cromwell had a red nose. But neither the artful Clarendon nor the scurrilous Denham could venture to throw the slightest imputation on the morals or the manners of Hampden. What was the opinion entertained respecting him by the best men of his time we learn from Baxter. That eminent person, eminent not only for his piety and his fervid devotional eloquence, but for his moderation, his knowledge of political affairs, and his skill in judging of characters, declared in the *Saint's Rest*, that one of the pleasures which he hoped to enjoy in heaven was the society of Hampden. In the editions printed after the Restoration, the name of Hampden was omitted. "But I must tell the reader," says Baxter, "that I did blot it out, not as changing my opinion of the person.... Mr. John Hampden was one that friends and enemies acknowledged to be most eminent for prudence, piety, and peaceable counsels, having the most universal praise of any gentleman that I remember of that age. I remember a moderate, prudent, aged gentleman, far from him, but acquainted with him, whom I have heard saying, that if he might choose what person

he would be then in the world, he would be John Hampden.” We cannot but regret that we have not fuller memorials of a man who, after passing through the most severe temptations by which human virtue can be tried, after acting a most conspicuous part in a revolution and a civil war, could yet deserve such praise as this from such authority. Yet the want of memorials is surely the best proof that hatred itself could find no blemish on his memory.

The story of his early life is soon told. He was the head of a family which had been settled in Buckinghamshire before the Conquest. Part of the estate which he inherited had been bestowed by Edward the Confessor on Baldwyn de Hampden, whose name seems to indicate that he was one of the Norman favourites of the last Saxon king. During the contest between the houses of York and Lancaster, the Hampdens adhered to the party of the Red Rose, and were, consequently, persecuted by Edward the Fourth, and favoured by Henry the Seventh. Under the Tudors, the family was great and flourishing. Griffith Hampden, high sheriff of Buckinghamshire, entertained Elizabeth with great magnificence at his seat. His son, William Hampden, sate in the Parliament which that Queen summoned in the year 1593. William married Elizabeth Cromwell, aunt of the celebrated man who afterwards governed the British islands with more than regal power; and from this marriage sprang John Hampden.

He was born in 1594. In 1597 his father died, and left him heir to a very large estate. After passing some years at the

grammar school of Thame, young Hampden was sent, at fifteen, to Magdalen College, in the University of Oxford. At nineteen, he was admitted a student of the Inner Temple, where he made himself master of the principles of the English law. In 1619 he married Elizabeth Symeon, a lady to whom he appears to have been fondly attached. In the following year he was returned to parliament by a borough which has in our time obtained a miserable celebrity, the borough of Grampound.

Of his private life during his early years little is known beyond what Clarendon has told us. "In his entrance into the world," says that great historian, "he indulged himself in all the licence in sports, and exercises, and company, which were used by men of the most jolly conversation." A remarkable change, however, passed on his character. "On a sudden," says Clarendon, "from a life of great pleasure and licence, he retired to extraordinary sobriety and strictness, to a more reserved and melancholy society." It is probable that this change took place when Hampden was about twenty-five years old. At that age he was united to a woman whom he loved and esteemed. At that age he entered into political life. A mind so happily constituted as his would naturally, under such circumstances, relinquish the pleasures of dissipation for domestic enjoyments and public duties.

His enemies have allowed that he was a man in whom virtue showed itself in its mildest and least austere form. With the morals of a Puritan, he had the manners of an accomplished

courtier. Even after the change in his habits, “he preserved,” says Clarendon, “his own natural cheerfulness and vivacity, and, above all, a flowing courtesy to all men.” These qualities distinguished him from most of the members of his sect and his party, and, in the great crisis in which he afterwards took a principal part, were of scarcely less service to the country than his keen sagacity and his dauntless courage.

In January 1621, Hampden took his seat in the House of Commons. His mother was exceedingly desirous that her son should obtain a peerage. His family, his possessions, and his personal accomplishments were such as would, in any age, have justified him in pretending to that honour. But in the reign of James the First there was one short cut to the House of Lords. It was but to ask, to pay, and to have. The sale of titles was carried on as openly as the sale of boroughs in our times.

Hampden turned away with contempt from the degrading honours with which his family desired to see him invested, and attached himself to the party which was in opposition to the court.

It was about this time, as Lord Nugent has justly remarked, that parliamentary opposition began to take a regular form. From a very early age, the English had enjoyed a far larger share of liberty than had fallen to the lot of any neighbouring people. How it chanced that a country conquered and enslaved by invaders, a country of which the soil had been portioned out among foreign adventurers and of which the laws were written in a foreign

tongue, a country given over to that worst tyranny, the tyranny of caste over caste, should have become the seat of civil liberty, the object of the admiration and envy of surrounding states, is one of the most obscure problems in the philosophy of history. But the fact is certain. Within a century and a half after the Norman conquest, the Great Charter was conceded. Within two centuries after the Conquest, the first House of Commons met. Froissart tells us, what indeed his whole narrative sufficiently proves, that of all the nations of the fourteenth century, the English were the least disposed to endure oppression. "C'est le plus périlleux peuple qui soit au monde, et plus outrageux et orgueilleux." The good canon probably did not perceive that all the prosperity and internal peace which this dangerous people enjoyed were the fruits of the spirit which he designates as proud and outrageous. He has, however, borne ample testimony to the effect, though he was not sagacious enough to trace it to its cause. "En le royaume d'Angleterre," says he, "toutes gens, laboureurs et marchands, ont appris de vivre en paix, et à mener leurs marchandises paisiblement, et les laboureurs labourer." In the fifteenth century, though England was convulsed by the struggle between the two branches of the royal family, the physical and moral condition of the people continued to improve. Villenage almost wholly disappeared. The calamities of war were little felt, except by those who bore arms. The oppressions of the government were little felt, except by the aristocracy. The institutions of the country when compared with the institutions of

the neighbouring kingdoms, seem to have been not undeserving of the praises of Fortescue. The government of Edward the Fourth, though we call it cruel and arbitrary, was humane and liberal when compared with that of Lewis the Eleventh, or that of Charles the Bold. Comines, who had lived amidst the wealthy cities of Flanders, and who had visited Florence and Venice, had never seen a people so well governed as the English. “Or selon mon avis,” says he, “entre toutes les seigneuries du monde, dont j’ay connoissance, ou la chose publique est miel traitée, et ou règne moins de violence sur le peuple, et ou il n’y a nuls édifices abbatus n’y démolis pour guerre, c’est Angleterre; et tombe le sort et le malheur sur ceux qui font la guerre.”

About the close of the fifteenth and the commencement of the sixteenth century, a great portion of the influence which the aristocracy had possessed passed to the crown. No English king has ever enjoyed such absolute power as Henry the Eighth. But while the royal prerogatives were acquiring strength at the expense of the nobility, two great revolutions took place, destined to be the parents of many revolutions, the invention of Printing, and the reformation of the Church.

The immediate effect of the Reformation in England was by no means favourable to political liberty. The authority which had been exercised by the Popes was transferred almost entire to the King. Two formidable powers which had often served to check each other were united in a single despot. If the system on which the founders of the Church of England acted could

have been permanent, the Reformation would have been, in a political sense, the greatest curse that ever fell on our country. But that system carried within it the seeds of its own death. It was possible to transfer the name of Head of the Church from Clement to Henry; but it was impossible to transfer to the new establishment the veneration which the old establishment had inspired. Mankind had not broken one yoke in pieces only in order to put on another. The supremacy of the Bishop of Rome had been for ages considered as a fundamental principle of Christianity. It had for it everything that could make a prejudice deep and strong, venerable antiquity, high authority, general consent. It had been taught in the first lessons of the nurse. It was taken for granted in all the exhortations of the priest. To remove it was to break innumerable associations, and to give a great and perilous shock to the principles. Yet this prejudice, strong as it was, could not stand in the great day of the deliverance of the human reason. And it was not to be expected that the public mind, just after freeing itself by an unexampled effort, from a bondage which it had endured for ages, would patiently submit to a tyranny which could plead no ancient title. Rome had at least prescription on its side. But Protestant intolerance, despotism in an upstart sect, infallibility claimed by guides who acknowledged that they had passed the greater part of their lives in error, restraints imposed on the liberty of private judgment at the pleasure of rulers who could vindicate their own proceedings only by asserting the liberty of private judgment, these things

could not long be borne. Those who had pulled down the crucifix could not long continue to persecute for the surplice. It required no great sagacity to perceive the inconsistency and dishonesty of men who, dissenting from almost all Christendom, would suffer none to dissent from themselves, who demanded freedom of conscience, yet refused to grant it, who execrated persecution, yet persecuted, who urged reason against the authority of one opponent, and authority against the reasons of another. Bonner acted at least in accordance with his own principles. Cranmer could vindicate himself from the charge of being a heretic only by arguments which made him out to be a murderer.

Thus the system on which the English Princes acted with respect to ecclesiastical affairs for some time after the Reformation was a system too obviously unreasonable to be lasting. The public mind moved while the government moved, but would not stop where the government stopped. The same impulse which had carried millions away from the Church of Rome continued to carry them forward in the same direction. As Catholics had become Protestants, Protestants became Puritans; and the Tudors and Stuarts were as unable to avert the latter change as the Popes had been to avert the former. The dissenting party increased and became strong under every kind of discouragement and oppression. They were a sect. The government persecuted them; and they became an opposition. The old constitution of England furnished to them the means of resisting the sovereign without breaking the law. They were

the majority of the House of Commons. They had the power of giving or withholding supplies; and, by a judicious exercise of this power, they might hope to take from the Church its usurped authority over the consciences of men, and from the Crown some part of the vast prerogative which it had recently acquired at the expense of the nobles and of the Pope.

The faint beginnings of this memorable contest may be discerned early in the reign of Elizabeth. The conduct of her last Parliament made it clear that one of those great revolutions which policy may guide but cannot stop was in progress. It was on the question of monopolies that the House of Commons gained its first great victory over the throne. The conduct of the extraordinary woman who then governed England is an admirable study for politicians who live in unquiet times. It shows how thoroughly she understood the people whom she ruled, and the crisis in which she was called to act. What she held she held firmly. What she gave she gave graciously. She saw that it was necessary to make a concession to the nation; and she made it not grudgingly, not tardily, not as a matter of bargain and sale, not, in a word, as Charles the First would have made it, but promptly and cordially. Before a bill could be framed or an address presented, she applied a remedy to the evil of which the nation complained. She expressed in the warmest terms her gratitude to her faithful Commons for detecting abuses which interested persons had concealed from her. If her successors had inherited her wisdom with her crown, Charles the First might

have died of old age, and James the Second would never have seen St. Germain's.

She died; and the kingdom passed to one who was, in his own opinion, the greatest master of king-craft that ever lived, but who was, in truth, one of those kings whom God seems to send for the express purpose of hastening revolutions. Of all the enemies of liberty whom Britain has produced, he was at once the most harmless and the most provoking. His office resembled that of the man who, in a Spanish bull-fight, goads the torpid savage to fury, by shaking a red rag in the air, and by now and then throwing a dart, sharp enough to sting, but too small to injure. The policy of wise tyrants has always been to cover their violent acts with popular forms. James was always obtruding his despotic theories on his subjects without the slightest necessity. His foolish talk exasperated them infinitely more than forced loans or benevolences would have done. Yet, in practice, no king ever held his prerogatives less tenaciously. He neither gave way gracefully to the advancing spirit of liberty nor took vigorous measures to stop it, but retreated before it with ludicrous haste, blustering and insulting as he retreated. The English people had been governed during near a hundred and fifty years by Princes who, whatever might be their frailties or their vices, had all possessed great force of character, and who, whether beloved or hated, had always been feared. Now, at length, for the first time since the day when the sceptre of Henry the Fourth dropped from the hand of his lethargic grandson, England had a king whom

she despised.

The follies and vices of the man increased the contempt which was produced by the feeble policy of the sovereign. The indecorous gallantries of the Court, the habits of gross intoxication in which even the ladies indulged, were alone sufficient to disgust a people whose manners were beginning to be strongly tinctured with austerity. But these were trifles. Crimes of the most frightful kind had been discovered; others were suspected. The strange story of the Gowries was not forgotten. The ignominious fondness of the King for his minions, the perjuries, the sorceries, the poisonings, which his chief favourites had planned within the walls of his palace, the pardon which, in direct violation of his duty and of his word, he had granted to the mysterious threats of a murderer, made him an object of loathing to many of his subjects. What opinion grave and moral persons residing at a distance from the Court entertained respecting him, we learn from Mrs. Hutchinson's Memoirs. England was no place, the seventeenth century no time, for Sporus and Locusta.

This was not all. The most ridiculous weaknesses seemed to meet in the wretched Solomon of Whitehall, pedantry, buffoonery, garrulity, low curiosity, the most contemptible personal cowardice. Nature and education had done their best to produce a finished specimen of all that a king ought not to be. His awkward figure, his rolling eye, his rickety walk, his nervous tremblings, his slobbering mouth, his broad Scotch accent, were

imperfections which might have been found in the best and greatest man. Their effect, however, was to make James and his office objects of contempt, and to dissolve those associations which had been created by the noble bearing of preceding monarchs, and which were in themselves no inconsiderable fence to royalty.

The sovereign whom James most resembled was, we think, Claudius Caesar. Both had the same feeble vacillating temper, the same childishness, the same coarseness, the same poltroonery. Both were men of learning; both wrote and spoke, not, indeed, well, but still in a manner in which it seems almost incredible that men so foolish should have written or spoken.

The follies and indecencies of James are well described in the words which Suetonius uses respecting Claudius: “*Multa talia, etiam privatis deformia, nedum principi, neque infacundo, neque indocto, immo etiam pertinaciter liberalibus studiis dedito.*” The description given by Suetonius of the manner in which the Roman prince transacted business exactly suits the Briton. “*In cognoscendo ac decernendo mira varietate animi fuit, modo circumspectus et sagax, modo inconsultus ac praeceps, nonnunquam frivolus amentique similis.*” Claudius was ruled successively by two bad women: James successively by two bad men. Even the description of the person of Claudius, which we find in the ancient memoirs, might, in many points, serve for that of James. “*Ceterum et ingredientem destituebant poplites minus firmi, et remisse quid vel serio, agentem multa dehonestabant,*

risus indecens, ira turpior, spumante rictu, praeterea linguae titubantia.”

The Parliament which James had called soon after his accession had been refractory. His second Parliament, called in the spring of 1614, had been more refractory still. It had been dissolved after a session of two months; and during six years the King had governed without having recourse to the legislature. During those six years, melancholy and disgraceful events, at home and abroad, had followed one another in rapid succession; the divorce of Lady Essex, the murder of Overbury, the elevation of Villiers, the pardon of Somerset, the disgrace of Coke, the execution of Raleigh, the battle of Prague, the invasion of the Palatinate by Spinola, the ignominious flight of the son-in-law of the English king, the depression of the Protestant interest all over the Continent. All the extraordinary modes by which James could venture to raise money had been tried. His necessities were greater than ever; and he was compelled to summon the Parliament in which Hampden first appeared as a public man.

This Parliament lasted about twelve months. During that time it visited with deserved punishment several of those who, during the preceding six years, had enriched themselves by peculation and monopoly. Mitchell, one of the grasping patentees who had purchased of the favourite the power of robbing the nation, was fined and imprisoned for life. Mompesson, the original, it is said, of Massinger's Overreach, was outlawed and deprived of his ill-gotten wealth. Even Sir Edward Villiers, the brother of

Buckingham, found it convenient to leave England. A greater name is to be added to the ignominious list. By this Parliament was brought to justice that illustrious philosopher whose memory genius has half redeemed from the infamy due to servility, to ingratitude, and to corruption.

After redressing internal grievances, the Commons proceeded to take into consideration the state of Europe. The King flew into a rage with them for meddling with such matters, and, with characteristic judgment, drew them into a controversy about the origin of their House and of its privileges. When he found that he could not convince them, he dissolved them in a passion, and sent some of the leaders of the Opposition to ruminate on his logic in prison.

During the time which elapsed between this dissolution and the meeting of the next Parliament, took place the celebrated negotiation respecting the Infanta. The would-be despot was unmercifully browbeaten. The would-be Solomon was ridiculously over-reached. Steenie, in spite of the begging and sobbing of his dear dad and gossip, carried off baby Charles in triumph to Madrid. The sweet lads, as James called them, came back safe, but without their errand. The great master of king-craft, in looking for a Spanish match, had found a Spanish war. In February 1624, a Parliament met, during the whole sitting of which, James was a mere puppet in the hands of his baby, and of his poor slave and dog. The Commons were disposed to support the King in the vigorous policy which his favourite

urged him to adopt. But they were not disposed to place any confidence in their feeble sovereign and his dissolute courtiers, or to relax in their efforts to remove public grievances. They therefore lodged the money which they voted for the war in the hands of Parliamentary Commissioners. They impeached the treasurer, Lord Middlesex, for corruption, and they passed a bill by which patents of monopoly were declared illegal.

Hampden did not, during the reign of James, take any prominent part in public affairs. It is certain, however, that he paid great attention to the details of Parliamentary business, and to the local interests of his own country. It was in a great measure owing to his exertions that Wendover and some other boroughs on which the popular party could depend recovered the elective franchise, in spite of the opposition of the Court.

The health of the King had for some time been declining. On the twenty-seventh of March 1625, he expired. Under his weak rule, the spirit of liberty had grown strong, and had become equal to a great contest. The contest was brought on by the policy of his successor. Charles bore no resemblance to his father. He was not a driveller, or a pedant, or a buffoon, or a coward. It would be absurd to deny that he was a scholar and a gentleman, a man of exquisite tastes in the fine arts, a man of strict morals in private life. His talents for business were respectable; his demeanour was kingly. But he was false, imperious, obstinate, narrow-minded, ignorant of the temper of his people, unobservant of the signs of his times. The whole principle of his government was resistance

to public opinion; nor did he make any real concession to that opinion till it mattered not whether he resisted or conceded, till the nation, which had long ceased to love him or to trust him, had at last ceased to fear him.

His first Parliament met in June 1625. Hampden sat in it as burgess for Wendover. The King wished for money. The Commons wished for the redress of grievances. The war, however, could not be carried on without funds. The plan of the Opposition was, it should seem, to dole out supplies by small sums, in order to prevent a speedy dissolution. They gave the King two subsidies only, and proceeded to complain that his ships had been employed against the Huguenots in France, and to petition in behalf of the Puritans who were persecuted in England. The King dissolved them, and raised money by Letters under his Privy Seal. The supply fell far short of what he needed; and, in the spring of 1626, he called together another Parliament. In this Parliament Hampden again sat for Wendover.

The Commons resolved to grant a very liberal supply, but to defer the final passing of the act for that purpose till the grievances of the nation should be redressed. The struggle which followed far exceeded in violence any that had yet taken place. The Commons impeached Buckingham. The King threw the managers of the impeachment into prison. The Commons denied the right of the King to levy tonnage and poundage without their consent. The King dissolved them. They put forth a remonstrance. The King circulated a declaration vindicating

his measures, and committed some of the most distinguished members of the Opposition to close custody. Money was raised by a forced loan, which was apportioned among the people according to the rate at which they had been respectively assessed to the last subsidy. On this occasion it was, that Hampden made his first stand for the fundamental principle of the English constitution. He positively refused to lend a farthing. He was required to give his reasons. He answered, "that he could be content to lend as well as others, but feared to draw upon himself that curse in Magna Charta which should be read twice a year against those who infringe it." For this spirited answer, the Privy Council committed him close prisoner to the Gate House. After some time, he was again brought up; but he persisted in his refusal, and was sent to a place of confinement in Hampshire.

The government went on, oppressing at home, and blundering in all its measures abroad. A war was foolishly undertaken against France, and more foolishly conducted. Buckingham led an expedition against Rhé, and failed ignominiously. In the mean time soldiers were billeted on the people. Crimes of which ordinary justice should have taken cognisance were punished by martial law. Near eighty gentlemen were imprisoned for refusing to contribute to the forced loan. The lower people who showed any signs of insubordination were pressed into the fleet, or compelled to serve in the army. Money, however, came in slowly; and the King was compelled to summon another Parliament. In the hope of conciliating his subjects, he set at liberty the

persons who had been imprisoned for refusing to comply with his unlawful demands. Hampden regained his freedom, and was immediately re-elected burgess for Wendover.

Early in 1628 the Parliament met. During its first session, the Commons prevailed on the King, after many delays and much equivocation, to give, in return for five subsidies, his full and solemn assent to that celebrated instrument, the second great charter of the liberties of England, known by the name of the Petition of Right. By agreeing to this act, the King bound himself to raise no taxes without the consent of Parliament, to imprison no man except by legal process, to billet no more soldiers on the people, and to leave the cognisance of offences to the ordinary tribunals.

In the summer, this memorable Parliament was prorogued. It met again in January 1629. Buckingham was no more. That weak, violent, and dissolute adventurer, who, with no talents or acquirements but those of a mere courtier, had, in a great crisis of foreign and domestic politics, ventured on the part of prime minister, had fallen, during the recess of Parliament, by the hand of an assassin. Both before and after his death the war had been feebly and unsuccessfully conducted. The King had continued, in direct violation of the Petition of Right, to raise tonnage and poundage without the consent of Parliament. The troops had again been billeted on the people; and it was clear to the Commons that the five subsidies which they had given as the price of the national liberties had been given in vain.

They met accordingly in no complying humour. They took into their most serious consideration the measures of the government concerning tonnage and poundage. They summoned the officers of the custom-house to their bar. They interrogated the barons of the exchequer. They committed one of the sheriffs of London. Sir John Eliot, a distinguished member of the Opposition, and an intimate friend of Hampden, proposed a resolution condemning the unconstitutional imposition. The Speaker said that the King had commanded him to put no such question to the vote. This decision produced the most violent burst of feeling ever seen within the walls of Parliament. Hayman remonstrated vehemently against the disgraceful language which had been heard from the chair. Eliot dashed the paper which contained his resolution on the floor of the House. Valentine and Hollis held the Speaker down in his seat by main force, and read the motion amidst the loudest shouts. The door was locked. The key was laid on the table. Black Rod knocked for admittance in vain. After passing several strong resolutions, the House adjourned. On the day appointed for its meeting it was dissolved by the King, and several of its most eminent members, among whom were Hollis and Sir John Eliot, were committed to prison.

Though Hampden had as yet taken little part in the debates of the House, he had been a member of many very important committees, and had read and written much concerning the law of Parliament. A manuscript volume of Parliamentary cases,

which is still in existence, contains many extracts from his notes.

He now retired to the duties and pleasures of a rural life. During the eleven years which followed the dissolution of the Parliament of 1628, he resided at his seat in one of the most beautiful parts of the county of Buckingham. The house, which has since his time been greatly altered, and which is now, we believe, almost entirely neglected, was an old English mansion, built in the days of the Plantagenets and the Tudors. It stood on the brow of a hill which overlooks a narrow valley. The extensive woods which surround it were pierced by long avenues. One of those avenues the grandfather of the great statesman had cut for the approach of Elizabeth; and the opening which is still visible for many miles, retains the name of the Queen's Gap. In this delightful retreat, Hampden passed several years, performing with great activity all the duties of a landed gentleman and a magistrate, and amusing himself with books and with field sports.

He was not in his retirement unmindful of his persecuted friends. In particular, he kept up a close correspondence with Sir John Eliot, who was confined in the Tower. Lord Nugent has published several of the Letters. We may perhaps be fanciful; but it seems to us that every one of them is an admirable illustration of some part of the character of Hampden which Clarendon has drawn.

Some of the correspondence relates to the two sons of Sir John Eliot. These young men were wild and unsteady; and

their father, who was now separated from them, was naturally anxious about their conduct. He at length resolved to send one of them to France, and the other to serve a campaign in the Low Countries. The letter which we subjoin shows that Hampden, though rigorous towards himself, was not uncharitable towards others, and that his puritanism was perfectly compatible with the sentiments and the tastes of an accomplished gentleman. It also illustrates admirably what has been said of him by Clarendon: "He was of that rare affability and temper in debate, and of that seeming humility and submission of judgment, as if he brought no opinion of his own with him, but a desire of information and instruction. Yet he had so subtle a way of interrogating, and, under cover of doubts, insinuating his objections, that he infused his own opinions into those from whom he pretended to learn and receive them."

The letter runs thus: "I am so perfectly acquainted with your clear insight into the dispositions of men, and ability to fit them with courses suitable, that, had you bestowed sons of mine as you have done your own, my judgment durst hardly have called it into question, especially when, in laying the design, you have prevented the objections to be made against it. For if Mr. Richard Eliot will, in the intermissions of action, add study to practice, and adorn that lively spirit with flowers of contemplation, he will raise our expectations of another Sir Edward Vere, that had this character—all summer in the field, all winter in his study—in whose fall fame makes this kingdom a greater loser;

and, having taken this resolution from counsel with the highest wisdom, as I doubt not you have, I hope and pray that the same power will crown it with a blessing answerable to our wish. The way you take with my other friend shows you to be none of the Bishop of Exeter's converts; [Hall, Bishop of Exeter, had written strongly, both in verse and in prose, against the fashion of sending young men of quality to travel.] of whose mind neither am I superstitiously. But had my opinion been asked, I should, as vulgar conceits use me to do, have showed my power rather to raise objections than to answer them. A temper between France and Oxford might have taken away his scruples, with more advantage to his years.... For although he be one of those that, if his age were looked for in no other book but that of the mind, would be found no ward if you should die tomorrow, yet it is a great hazard, methinks, to see so sweet a disposition guarded with no more, amongst a people whereof many make it their religion to be superstitious in impiety, and their behaviour to be affected in all manners. But God, who only knoweth the periods of life and opportunities to come, hath designed him, I hope, for his own service betime, and stirred up your providence to husband him so early for great affairs. Then shall he be sure to find Him in France that Abraham did in Shechem and Joseph in Egypt, under whose wing alone is perfect safety."

Sir John Eliot employed himself, during his imprisonment, in writing a treatise on government, which he transmitted to his friend. Hampden's criticisms are strikingly characteristic. They

are written with all that "flowing courtesy" which is ascribed to him by Clarendon. The objections are insinuated with so much delicacy that they could scarcely gall the most irritable author. We see too how highly Hampden valued in the writings of others that conciseness which was one of the most striking peculiarities of his own eloquence. Sir John Eliot's style was, it seems, too diffuse, and it is impossible not to admire the skill with which this is suggested. "The piece," says Hampden, "is as complete an image of the pattern as can be drawn by lines, a lively character of a large mind, the subject, method, and expression, excellent and homogeneal, and, to say truth, sweetheart, somewhat exceeding my commendations. My words cannot render them to the life. Yet, to show my ingenuity rather than wit, would not a less model have given a full representation of that subject, not by diminution but by contraction of parts? I desire to learn. I dare not say. The variations upon each particular seem many; all, I confess, excellent. The fountain was full, the channel narrow; that may be the cause; or that the author resembled Virgil, who made more verses by many than he intended to write. To extract a just number, had I seen all his, I could easily have bid him make fewer; but if he had bade me tell him which he should have spared, I had been posed."

This is evidently the writing not only of a man of good sense and natural good taste, but of a man of literary habits. Of the studies of Hampden little is known. But as it was at one time in contemplation to give him the charge of the education of

the Prince of Wales, it cannot be doubted that his acquirements were considerable. Davila, it is said, was one of his favourite writers. The moderation of Davila's opinions and the perspicuity and manliness of his style could not but recommend him to so judicious a reader. It is not improbable that the parallel between France and England, the Huguenots and the Puritans, had struck the mind of Hampden, and that he already found within himself powers not unequal to the lofty part of Coligni.

While he was engaged in these pursuits, a heavy domestic calamity fell on him. His wife, who had borne him nine children, died in the summer of 1634. She lies in the parish church of Hampden, close to the manor-house. The tender and energetic language of her epitaph still attests the bitterness of her husband's sorrow, and the consolation which he found in a hope full of immortality.

In the meantime, the aspect of public affairs grew darker and darker. The health of Eliot had sunk under an unlawful imprisonment of several years. The brave sufferer refused to purchase liberty, though liberty would to him have been life, by recognising the authority which had confined him. In consequence of the representations of his physicians, the severity of restraint was somewhat relaxed. But it was in vain. He languished and expired a martyr to that good cause for which his friend Hampden was destined to meet a more brilliant, but not a more honourable death.

All the promises of the king were violated without scruple or

shame. The Petition of Right to which he had, in consideration of moneys duly numbered, given a solemn assent, was set at nought. Taxes were raised by the royal authority. Patents of monopoly were granted. The old usages of feudal times were made pretexts for harassing the people with exactions unknown during many years. The Puritans were persecuted with cruelty worthy of the Holy Office. They were forced to fly from the country. They were imprisoned. They were whipped. Their ears were cut off. Their noses were slit. Their cheeks were branded with red-hot iron. But the cruelty of the oppressor could not tire out the fortitude of the victims. The mutilated defenders of liberty again defied the vengeance of the Star-Chamber, came back with undiminished resolution to the place of their glorious infamy, and manfully presented the stumps of their ears to be grubbed out by the hangman's knife. The hardy sect grew up and flourished in spite of everything that seemed likely to stunt it, struck its roots deep into a barren soil, and spread its branches wide to an inclement sky. The multitude thronged round Prynne in the pillory with more respect than they paid to Mainwaring in the pulpit, and treasured up the rags which the blood of Burton had soaked, with a veneration such as mitres and surplices had ceased to inspire.

For the misgovernment of this disastrous period Charles himself is principally responsible. After the death of Buckingham, he seems to have been his own prime minister. He had, however, two counsellors who seconded him, or went

beyond him, in intolerance and lawless violence, the one a superstitious driveller, as honest as a vile temper would suffer him to be, the other a man of great valour and capacity, but licentious, faithless, corrupt, and cruel.

Never were faces more strikingly characteristic of the individuals to whom they belonged, than those of Laud and Strafford, as they still remain portrayed by the most skilful hand of that age. The mean forehead, the pinched features, the peering eyes, of the prelate, suit admirably with his disposition. They mark him out as a lower kind of Saint Dominic, differing from the fierce and gloomy enthusiast who founded the Inquisition, as we might imagine the familiar imp of a spiteful witch to differ from an archangel of darkness. When we read His Grace's judgments, when we read the report which he drew up, setting forth that he had sent some separatists to prison, and imploring the royal aid against others, we feel a movement of indignation. We turn to his Diary, and we are at once as cool as contempt can make us. There we learn how his picture fell down, and how fearful he was lest the fall should be an omen; how he dreamed that the Duke of Buckingham came to bed to him, that King James walked past him, that he saw Thomas Flaxney in green garments, and the Bishop of Worcester with his shoulders wrapped in linen. In the early part of 1627, the sleep of this great ornament of the church seems to have been much disturbed. On the fifth of January, he saw a merry old man with a wrinkled countenance, named Grove, lying on the ground. On

the fourteenth of the same memorable month, he saw the Bishop of Lincoln jump on a horse and ride away. A day or two after this he dreamed that he gave the King drink in a silver cup, and that the King refused it, and called for glass. Then he dreamed that he had turned Papist; of all his dreams the only one, we suspect, which came through the gate of horn. But of these visions our favourite is that which, as he has recorded, he enjoyed on the night of Friday, the ninth of February 1627. "I dreamed," says he, "that I had the scurvy: and that forthwith all my teeth became loose. There was one in especial in my lower jaw, which I could scarcely keep in with my finger till I had called for help." Here was a man to have the superintendence of the opinions of a great nation!

But Wentworth,—who ever names him without thinking of those harsh dark features, ennobled by their expression into more than the majesty of an antique Jupiter; of that brow, that eye, that cheek, that lip, wherein, as in a chronicle, are written the events of many stormy and disastrous years, high enterprise accomplished, frightful dangers braved, power unsparingly exercised, suffering unshrinkingly borne; of that fixed look, so full of severity, of mournful anxiety, of deep thought, of dauntless resolution, which seems at once to forebode and to defy a terrible fate, as it lowers on us from the living canvas of Vandyke? Even at this day the haughty earl overawes posterity as he overawed his contemporaries, and excites the same interest when arraigned before the tribunal of history which

he excited at the bar of the House of Lords. In spite of ourselves, we sometimes feel towards his memory a certain relenting similar to that relenting which his defence, as Sir John Denham tells us, produced in Westminster Hall.

This great, brave, bad man entered the House of Commons at the same time with Hampden, and took the same side with Hampden. Both were among the richest and most powerful commoners in the kingdom. Both were equally distinguished by force of character and by personal courage. Hampden had more judgment and sagacity than Wentworth. But no orator of that time equalled Wentworth in force and brilliancy of expression. In 1626 both these eminent men were committed to prison by the King, Wentworth, who was among the leaders of the Opposition, on account of his parliamentary conduct, Hampden, who had not as yet taken a prominent part in debate, for refusing to pay taxes illegally imposed.

Here their path separated. After the death of Buckingham, the King attempted to seduce some of the chiefs of the Opposition from their party; and Wentworth was among those who yielded to the seduction. He abandoned his associates, and hated them ever after with the deadly hatred of a renegade. High titles and great employments were heaped upon him. He became Earl of Strafford, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, President of the Council of the North; and he employed all his power for the purpose of crushing those liberties of which he had been the most distinguished champion. His counsels respecting

public affairs were fierce and arbitrary. His correspondence with Laud abundantly proves that government without parliaments, government by the sword, was his favourite scheme. He was angry even that the course of justice between man and man should be unrestrained by the royal prerogative. He grudged to the courts of King's Bench and Common Pleas even that measure of liberty which the most absolute of the Bourbons allowed to the Parliaments of France. In Ireland, where he stood in place of the King, his practice was in strict accordance with his theory. He set up the authority of the executive government over that of the courts of law. He permitted no person to leave the island without his licence. He established vast monopolies for his own private benefit. He imposed taxes arbitrarily. He levied them by military force. Some of his acts are described even by the partial Clarendon as powerful acts, acts which marked a nature excessively imperious, acts which caused dislike and terror in sober and dispassionate persons, high acts of oppression. Upon a most frivolous charge, he obtained a capital sentence from a court-martial against a man of high rank who had given him offence. He debauched the daughter-in-law of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and then commanded that nobleman to settle his estate according to the wishes of the lady. The Chancellor refused. The Lord Lieutenant turned him out of office and threw him into prison. When the violent acts of the Long Parliament are blamed, let it not be forgotten from what a tyranny they rescued the nation.

Among the humbler tools of Charles were Chief-Justice Finch and Noy the Attorney-General. Noy had, like Wentworth, supported the cause of liberty in Parliament, and had, like Wentworth, abandoned that cause for the sake of office. He devised, in conjunction with Finch, a scheme of exaction which made the alienation of the people from the throne complete. A writ was issued by the King, commanding the city of London to equip and man ships of war for his service. Similar writs were sent to the towns along the coast. These measures, though they were direct violations of the Petition of Right, had at least some show of precedent in their favour. But, after a time, the government took a step for which no precedent could be pleaded, and sent writs of ship-money to the inland counties. This was a stretch of power on which Elizabeth herself had not ventured, even at a time when all laws might with propriety have been made to bend to that highest law, the safety of the state. The inland counties had not been required to furnish ships, or money in the room of ships, even when the Armada was approaching our shores. It seemed intolerable that a prince who, by assenting to the Petition of Right, had relinquished the power of levying ship-money even in the out-ports, should be the first to levy it on parts of the kingdom where it had been unknown under the most absolute of his predecessors.

Clarendon distinctly admits that this tax was intended, not only for the support of the navy, but “for a spring and magazine that should have no bottom, and for an everlasting supply of all

occasions.” The nation well understood this; and from one end of England to the other the public mind was strongly excited.

Buckinghamshire was assessed at a ship of four hundred and fifty tons, or a sum of four thousand five hundred pounds. The share of the tax which fell to Hampden was very small; so small, indeed, that the sheriff was blamed for setting so wealthy a man at so low a rate. But, though the sum demanded was a trifle, the principle involved was fearfully important. Hampden, after consulting the most eminent constitutional lawyers of the time, refused to pay the few shillings at which he was assessed, and determined to incur all the certain expense, and the probable danger, of bringing to a solemn hearing, this great controversy between the people and the Crown. “Till this time,” says Clarendon, “he was rather of reputation in his own country than of public discourse or fame in the kingdom; but then he grew the argument of all tongues, every man inquiring who and what he was that durst, at his own charge, support the liberty and prosperity of the kingdom.”

Towards the close of the year 1636 this great cause came on in the Exchequer Chamber before all the judges of England. The leading counsel against the writ was the celebrated Oliver St. John, a man whose temper was melancholy, whose manners were reserved, and who was as yet little known in Westminster Hall, but whose great talents had not escaped the penetrating eye of Hampden. The Attorney-General and Solicitor-General appeared for the Crown.

The arguments of the counsel occupied many days; and the Exchequer Chamber took a considerable time for deliberation. The opinion of the bench was divided. So clearly was the law in favour of Hampden that, though the judges held their situations only during the royal pleasure, the majority against him was the least possible. Five of the twelve pronounced in his favour. The remaining seven gave their voices for the writ.

The only effect of this decision was to make the public indignation stronger and deeper. "The judgment," says Clarendon, "proved of more advantage and credit to the gentleman condemned than to the King's service." The courage which Hampden had shown on this occasion, as the same historian tells us, "raised his reputation to a great height generally throughout the kingdom." Even courtiers and crown-lawyers spoke respectfully of him. "His carriage," says Clarendon, "throughout that agitation, was with that rare temper and modesty, that they who watched him narrowly to find some advantage against his person, to make him less resolute in his cause, were compelled to give him a just testimony." But his demeanour, though it impressed Lord Falkland with the deepest respect, though it drew forth the praises of Solicitor-General Herbert, only kindled into a fiercer flame the ever-burning hatred of Strafford. That minister in his letters to Laud murmured against the lenity with which Hampden was treated. "In good faith," he wrote, "were such men rightly served, they should be whipped into their right wits." Again he says, "I

still wish Mr. Hampden, and others to his likeness, were well whipped into their right senses. And if the rod be so used that it smart not, I am the more sorry.”

The person of Hampden was now scarcely safe. His prudence and moderation had hitherto disappointed those who would gladly have had a pretence for sending him to the prison of Eliot. But he knew that the eye of a tyrant was on him. In the year 1637 misgovernment had reached its height. Eight years had passed without a Parliament. The decision of the Exchequer Chamber had placed at the disposal of the Crown the whole property of the English people. About the time at which that decision was pronounced, Prynne, Bastwick, and Burton were mutilated by the sentence of the Star-Chamber, and sent to rot in remote dungeons. The estate and the person of every man who had opposed the court were at its mercy.

Hampden determined to leave England. Beyond the Atlantic Ocean a few of the persecuted Puritans had formed, in the wilderness of Connecticut, a settlement which has since become a prosperous commonwealth, and which, in spite of the lapse of time and of the change of government, still retains something of the character given to it by its first founders. Lord Saye and Lord Brooke were the original projectors of this scheme of emigration. Hampden had been early consulted respecting it. He was now, it appears, desirous to withdraw himself beyond the reach of oppressors who, as he probably suspected, and as we know, were bent on punishing his manful resistance to their tyranny. He was

accompanied by his kinsman Oliver Cromwell, over whom he possessed great influence, and in whom he alone had discovered, under an exterior appearance of coarseness and extravagance, those great and commanding talents which were afterwards the admiration and the dread of Europe.

The cousins took their passage in a vessel which lay in the Thames, and which was bound for North America. They were actually on board, when an order of council appeared, by which the ship was prohibited from sailing. Seven other ships, filled with emigrants, were stopped at the same time.

Hampden and Cromwell remained; and with them remained the Evil Genius of the House of Stuart. The tide of public affairs was even now on the turn. The King had resolved to change the ecclesiastical constitution of Scotland, and to introduce into the public worship of that kingdom ceremonies which the great body of the Scots regarded as Popish. This absurd attempt produced, first discontents, then riots, and at length open rebellion. A provisional government was established at Edinburgh, and its authority was obeyed throughout the kingdom. This government raised an army, appointed a general, and summoned an assembly of the Kirk. The famous instrument called the Covenant was put forth at this time, and was eagerly subscribed by the people.

The beginnings of this formidable insurrection were strangely neglected by the King and his advisers. But towards the close of the year 1638 the danger became pressing. An army was raised; and early in the following spring Charles marched northward

at the head of a force sufficient, as it seemed, to reduce the Covenanters to submission.

But Charles acted at this conjuncture as he acted at every important conjuncture throughout his life. After oppressing, threatening, and blustering, he hesitated and failed. He was bold in the wrong place, and timid in the wrong place. He would have shown his wisdom by being afraid before the liturgy was read in St. Giles's church. He put off his fear till he had reached the Scottish border with his troops. Then, after a feeble campaign, he concluded a treaty with the insurgents, and withdrew his army. But the terms of the pacification were not observed. Each party charged the other with foul play. The Scots refused to disarm. The King found great difficulty in re-assembling his forces. His late expedition had drained his treasury. The revenues of the next year had been anticipated. At another time, he might have attempted to make up the deficiency by illegal expedients; but such a course would clearly have been dangerous when part of the island was in rebellion. It was necessary to call a Parliament. After eleven years of suffering, the voice of the nation was to be heard once more.

In April 1640, the Parliament met; and the King had another chance of conciliating his people. The new House of Commons was, beyond all comparison, the least refractory House of Commons that had been known for many years. Indeed, we have never been able to understand how, after so long a period of misgovernment, the representatives of the nation should have

shown so moderate and so loyal a disposition. Clarendon speaks with admiration of their dutiful temper. "The House, generally," says he, "was exceedingly disposed to please the King, and to do him service." "It could never be hoped," he observes elsewhere, "that more sober or dispassionate men would ever meet together in that place, or fewer who brought ill purposes with them."

In this Parliament Hampden took his seat as member for Buckinghamshire, and thenceforward, till the day of his death, gave himself up, with scarcely any intermission, to public affairs. He took lodgings in Gray's Inn Lane, near the house occupied by Pym, with whom he lived in habits of the closest intimacy. He was now decidedly the most popular man in England. The Opposition looked to him as their leader, and the servants of the King treated him with marked respect.

Charles requested the Parliament to vote an immediate supply, and pledged his word that, if they would gratify him in this request, he would afterwards give them time to represent their grievances to him. The grievances under which the nation suffered were so serious, and the royal word had been so shamefully violated, that the Commons could hardly be expected to comply with this request. During the first week of the session, the minutes of the proceedings against Hampden were laid on the table by Oliver St. John, and a committee reported that the case was matter of grievance. The King sent a message to the Commons, offering, if they would vote him twelve subsidies, to give up the prerogative of ship-money. Many years before, he

had received five subsidies in consideration of his assent to the Petition of Right. By assenting to that petition, he had given up the right of levying ship-money, if he ever possessed it. How he had observed the promises made to his third Parliament, all England knew; and it was not strange that the Commons should be somewhat unwilling to buy from him, over and over again, their own ancient and undoubted inheritance.

His message, however, was not unfavourably received. The Commons were ready to give a large supply; but they were not disposed to give it in exchange for a prerogative of which they altogether denied the existence. If they acceded to the proposal of the King, they recognised the legality of the writs of ship-money.

Hampden, who was a greater master of parliamentary tactics than any man of his time, saw that this was the prevailing feeling, and availed himself of it with great dexterity. He moved that the question should be put, "Whether the House would consent to the proposition made by the King, as contained in the message." Hyde interfered, and proposed that the question should be divided; that the sense of the House should be taken merely on the point whether there should be a supply or no supply; and that the manner and the amount should be left for subsequent consideration.

The majority of the House was for granting a supply, but against granting it in the manner proposed by the King. If the House had divided on Hampden's question, the court would have

sustained a defeat; if on Hyde's, the court would have gained an apparent victory. Some members called for Hyde's motion, others, for Hampden's. In the midst of the uproar, the secretary of state, Sir Harry Vane, rose and stated that the supply would not be accepted unless it were voted according to the tenor of the message. Vane was supported by Herbert, the Solicitor-General. Hyde's motion was therefore no further pressed, and the debate on the general question was adjourned till the next day.

On the next day the King came down to the House of Lords, and dissolved the Parliament with an angry speech. His conduct on this occasion has never been defended by any of his apologists. Clarendon condemns it severely. "No man," says he, "could imagine what offence the Commons had given." The offence which they had given is plain. They had, indeed, behaved most temperately and most respectfully. But they had shown a disposition to redress wrongs and to vindicate the laws; and this was enough to make them hateful to a king whom no law could bind, and whose whole government was one system of wrong.

The nation received the intelligence of the dissolution with sorrow and indignation, The only persons to whom this event gave pleasure were those few discerning men who thought that the maladies of the state were beyond the reach of gentle remedies. Oliver St. John's joy was too great for concealment. It lighted up his dark and melancholy features, and made him, for the first time, indiscreetly communicative. He told Hyde that things must be worse before they could be better, and that

the dissolved Parliament would never have done all that was necessary. St. John, we think, was in the right. No good could then have been done by any Parliament which did not fully understand that no confidence could safely be placed in the King, and that, while he enjoyed more than the shadow of power, the nation would never enjoy more than the shadow of liberty.

As soon as Charles had dismissed the Parliament, he threw several members of the House of Commons into prison. Ship-money was exacted more rigorously than ever; and the Mayor and Sheriffs of London were prosecuted before the Star-Chamber for slackness in levying it. Wentworth, it is said, observed, with characteristic insolence and cruelty, that things would never go right till the Aldermen were hanged. Large sums were raised by force on those counties in which the troops were quartered. All the wretched shifts of a beggared exchequer were tried. Forced loans were raised. Great quantities of goods were bought on long credit and sold for ready money. A scheme for debasing the currency was under consideration. At length, in August, the King again marched northward.

The Scots advanced into England to meet him. It is by no means improbable that this bold step was taken by the advice of Hampden, and of those with whom he acted; and this has been made matter of grave accusation against the English Opposition. It is said that to call in the aid of foreigners in a domestic quarrel is the worst of treasons, and that the Puritan leaders, by taking this course, showed that they were regardless of the honour and

independence of the nation, and anxious only for the success of their own faction. We are utterly unable to see any distinction between the case of the Scotch invasion in 1640, and the case of the Dutch invasion in 1688; or rather, we see distinctions which are to the advantage of Hampden and his friends. We believe Charles to have been a worse and more dangerous king than his son. The Dutch were strangers to us, the Scots a kindred people speaking the same language, subjects of the same prince, not aliens in the eye of the law. If, indeed, it had been possible that a Scotch army or a Dutch army could have enslaved England, those who persuaded Leslie to cross the Tweed, and those who signed the invitation to the Prince of Orange, would have been traitors to their country. But such a result was out of the question. All that either a Scotch or a Dutch invasion could do was to give the public feeling of England an opportunity to show itself. Both expeditions would have ended in complete and ludicrous discomfiture, had Charles and James been supported by their soldiers and their people. In neither case, therefore, was the independence of England endangered; in both cases her liberties were preserved.

The second campaign of Charles against the Scots was short and ignominious. His soldiers, as soon as they saw the enemy, ran away as English soldiers have never run either before or since. It can scarcely be doubted that their flight was the effect, not of cowardice, but of disaffection. The four northern counties of England were occupied by the Scotch army and the King retired

to York.

The game of tyranny was now up. Charles had risked and lost his last stake. It is not easy to retrace the mortifications and humiliations which the tyrant now had to endure, without a feeling of vindictive pleasure. His army was mutinous; his treasury was empty; his people clamoured for a Parliament; addresses and petitions against the government were presented. Strafford was for shooting the petitioners by martial law; but the King could not trust the soldiers. A great council of Peers was called at York; but the King could not trust even the Peers. He struggled, evaded, hesitated, tried every shift, rather than again face the representatives of his injured people. At length no shift was left. He made a truce with the Scots, and summoned a Parliament.

The leaders of the popular party had, after the late dissolution, remained in London for the purpose of organizing a scheme of opposition to the Court. They now exerted themselves to the utmost. Hampden, in particular, rode from county to county, exhorting the electors to give their votes to men worthy of their confidence. The great majority of the returns was on the side of the Opposition. Hampden was himself chosen member both for Wendover and Buckinghamshire. He made his election to serve for the county.

On the third of November 1640, a day to be long remembered, met that great Parliament, destined to every extreme of fortune, to empire and to servitude, to glory and to contempt; at one time

the sovereign of its sovereign, at another time the servant of its servants. From the first day of meeting the attendance was great; and the aspect of the members was that of men not disposed to do the work negligently. The dissolution of the late Parliament had convinced most of them that half measures would no longer suffice. Clarendon tells us, that “the same men who, six months before, were observed to be of very moderate tempers, and to wish that gentle remedies might be applied, talked now in another dialect both of kings and persons; and said that they must now be of another temper than they were the last Parliament.” The debt of vengeance was swollen by all the usury which had been accumulating during many years; and payment was made to the full.

This memorable crisis called forth parliamentary abilities such as England had never before seen. Among the most distinguished members of the House of Commons were Falkland, Hyde, Digby, young Harry Vane, Oliver St. John, Denzil Hollis, Nathaniel Fiennes. But two men exercised a paramount influence over the legislature and the country, Pym and Hampden; and by the universal consent of friends and enemies, the first place belonged to Hampden.

On occasions which required set speeches Pym generally took the lead. Hampden very seldom rose till late in a debate. His speaking was of that kind which has, in every age, been held in the highest estimation by English Parliaments, ready, weighty, perspicuous, condensed. His perception of the feelings of the

House was exquisite, his temper unalterably placid, his manner eminently courteous and gentlemanlike. "Even with those," says Clarendon, "who were able to preserve themselves from his infusions, and who discerned those opinions to be fixed in him with which they could not comply, he always left the character of an ingenious and conscientious person." His talents for business were as remarkable as his talents for debate. "He was," says Clarendon, "of an industry and vigilance not to be tired out or wearied by the most laborious, and of parts not to be imposed upon by the most subtle and sharp." Yet it was rather to his moral than to his intellectual qualities that he was indebted for the vast influence which he possessed. "When this parliament began"—we again quote Clarendon—"the eyes of all men were fixed upon him, as their patriae pater, and the pilot that must steer the vessel through the tempests and rocks which threatened it. And I am persuaded his power and interest at that time were greater to do good or hurt than any man's in the kingdom, or than any man of his rank hath had in any time; for his reputation of honesty was universal, and his affections seemed so publicly guided, that no corrupt or private ends could bias them.... He was indeed a very wise man, and of great parts, and possessed with the most absolute spirit of popularity, and the most absolute faculties to govern the people, of any man I ever knew."

It is sufficient to recapitulate shortly the acts of the Long Parliament during its first session. Strafford and Laud were impeached and imprisoned. Strafford was afterwards attainted

by Bill, and executed. Lord Keeper Finch fled to Holland, Secretary Windebank to France. All those whom the King had, during the last twelve years, employed for the oppression of his people, from the servile judges who had pronounced in favour of the crown against Hampden, down to the sheriffs who had distrained for ship-money, and the custom-house officers who had levied tonnage and poundage, were summoned to answer for their conduct. The Star-Chamber, the High Commission Court, the Council of York, were abolished. Those unfortunate victims of Laud who, after undergoing ignominious exposure and cruel manglings, had been sent to languish in distant prisons, were set at liberty, and conducted through London in triumphant procession. The King was compelled to give the judges patents for life or during good behaviour. He was deprived of those oppressive powers which were the last relics of the old feudal tenures. The Forest Courts and the Stannary Courts were reformed. It was provided that the Parliament then sitting should not be prorogued or dissolved without its own consent, and that a Parliament should be held at least once every three years.

Many of these measures Lord Clarendon allows to have been most salutary; and few persons will, in our times, deny that, in the laws passed during this session, the good greatly preponderated over the evil. The abolition of those three hateful courts, the Northern Council, the Star-Chamber, and the High Commission, would alone entitle the Long Parliament to the lasting gratitude of Englishmen.

The proceeding against Strafford undoubtedly seems hard to people living in our days. It would probably have seemed merciful and moderate to people living in the sixteenth century. It is curious to compare the trial of Charles's minister with the trial, if it can be so called, of Lord Seymour of Sudeley, in the blessed reign of Edward the Sixth. None of the great reformers of our Church doubted the propriety of passing an act of Parliament for cutting off Lord Seymour's head without a legal conviction. The pious Cranmer voted for that act; the pious Latimer preached for it; the pious Edward returned thanks for it; and all the pious Lords of the council together exhorted their victim to what they were pleased facetiously to call "the quiet and patient suffering of justice."

But it is not necessary to defend the proceedings against Strafford by any such comparison. They are justified, in our opinion, by that which alone justifies capital punishment or any punishment, by that which alone justifies war, by the public danger. That there is a certain amount of public danger which will justify a legislature in sentencing a man to death by retrospective law, few people, we suppose, will deny. Few people, for example, will deny that the French Convention was perfectly justified in placing Robespierre, St. Just, and Couthon under the ban of the law, without a trial. This proceeding differed from the proceeding against Strafford only in being much more rapid and violent. Strafford was fully heard. Robespierre was not suffered to defend himself. Was there, then, in the case of

Strafford, a danger sufficient to justify an act of attainder? We believe that there was. We believe that the contest in which the Parliament was engaged against the King was a contest for the security of our property, for the liberty of our persons, for everything which makes us to differ from the subjects of Don Miguel. We believe that the cause of the Commons was such as justified them in resisting the King, in raising an army, in sending thousands of brave men to kill and to be killed. An act of attainder is surely not more a departure from the ordinary course of law than a civil war. An act of attainder produces much less suffering than a civil war. We are, therefore, unable to discover on what principle it can be maintained that a cause which justifies a civil war will not justify an act of attainder.

Many specious arguments have been urged against the retrospective law by which Strafford was condemned to death. But all these arguments proceed on the supposition that the crisis was an ordinary crisis. The attainder was, in truth, a revolutionary measure. It was part of a system of resistance which oppression had rendered necessary. It is as unjust to judge of the conduct pursued by the Long Parliament towards Strafford on ordinary principles, as it would have been to indict Fairfax for murder because he cut down a cornet at Naseby. From the day on which the Houses met, there was a war waged by them against the King, a war for all that they held dear, a war carried on at first by means of parliamentary forms, at last by physical force; and, as in the second stage of that war, so in the first, they were entitled to do

many things which, in quiet times, would have been culpable.

We must not omit to mention that those who were afterwards the most distinguished ornaments of the King's party supported the bill of attainder. It is almost certain that Hyde voted for it. It is quite certain that Falkland both voted and spoke for it. The opinion of Hampden, as far as it can be collected from a very obscure note of one of his speeches, seems to have been that the proceeding by Bill was unnecessary, and that it would be a better course to obtain judgment on the impeachment.

During this year the Court opened a negotiation with the leaders of the Opposition. The Earl of Bedford was invited to form an administration on popular principles. St. John was made solicitor-general. Hollis was to have been secretary of state, and Pym chancellor of the exchequer. The post of tutor to the Prince of Wales was designed for Hampden. The death of the Earl of Bedford prevented this arrangement from being carried into effect; and it may be doubted whether, even if that nobleman's life had been prolonged, Charles would ever have consented to surround himself with counsellors whom he could not but hate and fear.

Lord Clarendon admits that the conduct of Hampden during this year was mild and temperate, that he seemed disposed rather to soothe than to excite the public mind, and that, when violent and unreasonable motions were made by his followers, he generally left the House before the division, lest he should seem to give countenance to their extravagance. His temper

was moderate. He sincerely loved peace. He felt also great fear lest too precipitate a movement should produce a reaction. The events which took place early in the next session clearly showed that this fear was not unfounded.

During the autumn the Parliament adjourned for a few weeks. Before the recess, Hampden was despatched to Scotland by the House of Commons, nominally as a commissioner, to obtain security for a debt which the Scots had contracted during the last invasion; but in truth that he might keep watch over the King, who had now repaired to Edinburgh, for the purpose of finally adjusting the points of difference which remained between him and his northern subjects. It was the business of Hampden to dissuade the Covenanters from making their peace with the Court, at the expense of the popular party in England.

While the King was in Scotland, the Irish rebellion broke out. The suddenness and violence of this terrible explosion excited a strange suspicion in the public mind. The Queen was a professed Papist. The King and the Archbishop of Canterbury had not indeed been reconciled to the See of Rome; but they had, while acting towards the Puritan party with the utmost rigour, and speaking of that party with the utmost contempt, shown great tenderness and respect towards the Catholic religion and its professors. In spite of the wishes of successive Parliaments, the Protestant separatists had been cruelly persecuted. And at the same time, in spite of the wishes of those very Parliaments, laws which were in force against the Papists, and which, unjustifiable

as they were, suited the temper of that age, had not been carried into execution. The Protestant nonconformists had not yet learned toleration in the school of suffering. They reprobated the partial lenity which the government showed towards idolaters; and, with some show of reason, ascribed to bad motives conduct which, in such a king as Charles, and such a prelate as Laud, could not possibly be ascribed to humanity or to liberality of sentiment. The violent Arminianism of the Archbishop, his childish attachment to ceremonies, his superstitious veneration for altars, vestments, and painted windows, his bigoted zeal for the constitution and the privileges of his order, his known opinions respecting the celibacy of the clergy, had excited great disgust throughout that large party which was every day becoming more and more hostile to Rome, and more and more inclined to the doctrines and the discipline of Geneva. It was believed by many that the Irish rebellion had been secretly encouraged by the Court; and, when the Parliament met again in November, after a short recess, the Puritans were more intractable than ever.

But that which Hampden had feared had come to pass. A reaction had taken place. A large body of moderate and well-meaning men, who had heartily concurred in the strong measures adopted before the recess, were inclined to pause. Their opinion was that, during many years the country had been grievously misgoverned, and that a great reform had been necessary; but that a great reform had been made, that the grievances of the nation

had been fully redressed, that sufficient vengeance had been exacted for the past, that sufficient security had been provided for the future, and that it would, therefore, be both ungrateful and unwise to make any further attacks on the royal prerogative. In support of this opinion many plausible arguments have been used. But to all these arguments there is one short answer. The King could not be trusted.

At the head of those who may be called the Constitutional Royalists were Falkland, Hyde, and Culpeper. All these eminent men had, during the former year, been in very decided opposition to the Court. In some of those very proceedings with which their admirers reproach Hampden, they had taken a more decided part than Hampden. They had all been concerned in the impeachment of Strafford. They had all, there is reason to believe, voted for the Bill of Attainder. Certainly none of them voted against it. They had all agreed to the act which made the consent of the Parliament necessary to a dissolution or prorogation. Hyde had been among the most active of those who attacked the Council of York. Falkland had voted for the exclusion of the bishops from the Upper House. They were now inclined to halt in the path of reform, perhaps to retrace a few of their steps.

A direct collision soon took place between the two parties into which the House of Commons, lately at almost perfect unity with itself, was now divided. The opponents of the government moved that celebrated address to the King which is known by the name of the Grand Remonstrance. In this address all the oppressive

acts of the preceding fifteen years were set forth with great energy of language; and, in conclusion, the King was entreated to employ no ministers in whom the Parliament could not confide.

The debate on the Remonstrance was long and stormy. It commenced at nine in the morning of the twenty-first of November, and lasted till after midnight. The division showed that a great change had taken place in the temper of the House. Though many members had retired from exhaustion, three hundred voted and the Remonstrance was carried by a majority of only nine. A violent debate followed, on the question whether the minority should be allowed to protest against this decision. The excitement was so great that several members were on the point of proceeding to personal violence. "We had sheathed our swords in each other's bowels," says an eye-witness, "had not the sagacity and great calmness of Mr. Hampden, by a short speech, prevented it." The House did not rise till two in the morning.

The situation of the Puritan leaders was now difficult and full of peril. The small majority which they still had might soon become a minority. Out of doors, their supporters in the higher and middle classes were beginning to fall off. There was a growing opinion that the King had been hardly used. The English are always inclined to side with a weak party which is in the wrong, rather than with a strong party which is in the right. This may be seen in all contests, from contests of boxers to contests of faction. Thus it was that a violent reaction took place in favour of Charles the Second against the Whigs in 1681. Thus

it was that an equally violent reaction took place in favour of George the Third against the coalition in 1784. A similar action was beginning to take place during the second year of the Long Parliament. Some members of the Opposition “had resumed” says Clarendon, “their old resolution of leaving the kingdom.” Oliver Cromwell openly declared that he and many others would have emigrated if they had been left in a minority on the question of the Remonstrance.

Charles had now a last chance of regaining the affection of his people. If he could have resolved to give his confidence to the leaders of the moderate party in the House of Commons, and to regulate his proceedings by their advice, he might have been, not, indeed, as he had been, a despot, but the powerful and respected king of a free people. The nation might have enjoyed liberty and repose under a government with Falkland at its head, checked by a constitutional Opposition under the conduct of Hampden. It was not necessary that, in order to accomplish this happy end, the King should sacrifice any part of his lawful prerogative, or submit to any conditions inconsistent with his dignity. It was necessary only that he should abstain from treachery, from violence, from gross breaches of the law. This was all that the nation was then disposed to require of him. And even this was too much.

For a short time he seemed inclined to take a wise and temperate course. He resolved to make Falkland secretary of state, and Culpeper chancellor of the exchequer. He declared his intention of conferring in a short time some important office on

Hyde. He assured these three persons that he would do nothing relating to the House of Commons without their joint advice, and that he would communicate all his designs to them in the most unreserved manner. This resolution, had he adhered to it, would have averted many years of blood and mourning. But “in very few days,” says Clarendon, “he did fatally swerve from it.”

On the third of January 1642, without giving the slightest hint of his intention to those advisers whom he had solemnly promised to consult, he sent down the attorney-general to impeach Lord Kimbolton, Hampden, Pym, Hollis, and two other members of the House of Commons, at the bar of the Lords, on a charge of High Treason. It is difficult to find in the whole history of England such an instance of tyranny, perfidy, and folly. The most precious and ancient rights of the subject were violated by this act. The only way in which Hampden and Pym could legally be tried for treason at the suit of the King, was by a petty jury on a bill found by a grand jury. The attorney-general had no right to impeach them. The House of Lords had no right to try them.

The Commons refused to surrender their members. The Peers showed no inclination to usurp the unconstitutional jurisdiction which the King attempted to force on them. A contest began, in which violence and weakness were on the one side, law and resolution on the other. Charles sent an officer to seal up the lodgings and trunks of the accused members. The Commons sent their serjeant to break the seals. The tyrant resolved to follow up one outrage by another. In making the charge, he had

struck at the institution of juries. In executing the arrest, he struck at the privileges of Parliament. He resolved to go to the House in person with an armed force, and there to seize the leaders of the Opposition, while engaged in the discharge of their parliamentary duties.

What was his purpose? Is it possible to believe that he had no definite purpose, that he took the most important step of his whole reign without having for one moment considered what might be its effects? Is it possible to believe that he went merely for the purpose of making himself a laughing-stock, that he intended, if he had found the accused members, and if they had refused, as it was their right and duty to refuse, the submission which he illegally demanded, to leave the House without bringing them away? If we reject both these suppositions, we must believe, and we certainly do believe, that he went fully determined to carry his unlawful design into effect by violence, and, if necessary, to shed the blood of the chiefs of the Opposition on the very floor of the Parliament House.

Lady Carlisle conveyed intelligence of the design to Pym. The five members had time to withdraw before the arrival of Charles. They left the House as he was entering New Palace Yard. He was accompanied by about two hundred halberdiers of his guard, and by many gentlemen of the Court armed with swords. He walked up Westminster Hall. At the southern end of the Hall his attendants divided to the right and left and formed a lane to the door of the House of Commons. He knocked, entered,

darted a look towards the place which Pym usually occupied, and, seeing it empty, walked up to the table. The Speaker fell on his knee. The members rose and uncovered their heads in profound silence, and the King took his seat in the chair. He looked round the House. But the five members were nowhere to be seen. He interrogated the Speaker. The Speaker answered, that he was merely the organ of the House, and had neither eyes to see, nor tongue to speak, but according to their direction. The King muttered a few feeble sentences about his respect for the laws of the realm, and the privileges of Parliament, and retired. As he passed along the benches, several resolute voices called out audibly "Privilege!" He returned to Whitehall with his company of bravoes, who, while he was in the House, had been impatiently waiting in the lobby for the word, cocking their pistols, and crying, "Fall on." That night he put forth a proclamation, directing that the ports should be stopped, and that no person should, at his peril, venture to harbour the accused members.

Hampden and his friends had taken refuge in Coleman Street. The city of London was indeed the fastness of public liberty, and was, in those times, a place of at least as much importance as Paris during the French Revolution. The city, properly so called, now consists in a great measure of immense warehouses and counting-houses, which are frequented by traders and their clerks during the day, and left in almost total solitude during the night. It was then closely inhabited by three hundred thousand

persons, to whom it was not merely a place of business, but a place of constant residence. The great capital had as complete a civil and military organization as if it had been an independent republic. Each citizen had his company; and the companies, which now seem to exist only for the sake of epicures and of antiquaries, were then formidable brotherhoods, the members of which were almost as closely bound together as the members of a Highland clan. How strong these artificial ties were, the numerous and valuable legacies anciently bequeathed by citizens to their corporations abundantly prove. The municipal offices were filled by the most opulent and respectable merchants of the kingdom. The pomp of the magistracy of the capital was inferior only to that which surrounded the person of the sovereign. The Londoners loved their city with that patriotic love which is found only in small communities, like those of ancient Greece, or like those which arose in Italy during the middle ages. The numbers, the intelligence, the wealth of the citizens, the democratical form of their local government, and their vicinity to the Court and to the Parliament, made them one of the most formidable bodies in the kingdom. Even as soldiers they were not to be despised. In an age in which war is a profession, there is something ludicrous in the idea of battalions composed of apprentices and shopkeepers, and officered by aldermen. But in the early part of the seventeenth century, there was no standing army in the island; and the militia of the metropolis was not inferior in training to the militia of other places. A city which could furnish many

thousands of armed men, abounding in natural courage, and not absolutely untinged with military discipline, was a formidable auxiliary in times of internal dissension. On several occasions during the civil war, the trainbands of London distinguished themselves highly; and at the battle of Newbury, in particular, they repelled the fiery onset of Rupert, and saved the army of the Parliament from destruction.

The people of this great city had long been thoroughly devoted to the national cause. Many of them had signed a protestation in which they declared their resolution to defend the privileges of Parliament. Their enthusiasm had, indeed, of late begun to cool. But the impeachment of the five members, and the insult offered to the House of Commons, inflamed them to fury. Their houses, their purses, their pikes, were at the command of the representatives of the nation. London was in arms all night. The next day the shops were closed; the streets were filled with immense crowds; the multitude pressed round the King's coach, and insulted him with opprobrious cries. The House of Commons, in the meantime, appointed a committee to sit in the city, for the purpose of inquiring into the circumstances of the late outrage.

The members of the committee were welcomed by a deputation of the common council. Merchant Taylors' Hall, Goldsmiths' Hall, and Grocers' Hall, were fitted up for their sittings. A guard of respectable citizens, duly relieved twice a day, was posted at their doors. The sheriffs were charged to watch

over the safety of the accused members, and to escort them to and from the committee with every mark of honour.

A violent and sudden revulsion of feeling, both in the House and out of it, was the effect of the late proceedings of the King. The Opposition regained in a few hours all the ascendancy which it had lost. The constitutional royalists were filled with shame and sorrow. They saw that they had been cruelly deceived by Charles. They saw that they were, unjustly, but not unreasonably, suspected by the nation. Clarendon distinctly says that they perfectly detested the counsels by which the King had been guided, and were so much displeased and dejected at the unfair manner in which he had treated them that they were inclined to retire from his service. During the debates on the breach of privilege, they preserved a melancholy silence. To this day, the advocates of Charles take care to say as little as they can about his visit to the House of Commons, and, when they cannot avoid mention of it, attribute to infatuation an act which, on any other supposition, they must admit to have been a frightful crime.

The Commons, in a few days, openly defied the King, and ordered the accused members to attend in their places at Westminster and to resume their parliamentary duties. The citizens resolved to bring back the champions of liberty in triumph before the windows of Whitehall. Vast preparations were made both by land and water for this great festival.

The King had remained in his palace, humbled, dismayed, and bewildered, "feeling," says Clarendon, "the trouble and

agony which usually attend generous and magnanimous minds upon their having committed errors"; feeling, we should say, the despicable repentance which attends the man who, having attempted to commit a crime, finds that he has only committed a folly. The populace hooted and shouted all day before the gates of the royal residence. The tyrant could not bear to see the triumph of those whom he had destined to the gallows and the quartering-block. On the day preceding that which was fixed for their return, he fled, with a few attendants, from that palace which he was never to see again till he was led through it to the scaffold.

On the eleventh of January, the Thames was covered with boats, and its shores with the gazing multitude. Armed vessels decorated with streamers, were ranged in two lines from London Bridge to Westminster Hall. The members returned upon the river in a ship manned by sailors who had volunteered their services. The trainbands of the city, under the command of the sheriffs, marched along the Strand, attended by a vast crowd of spectators, to guard the avenues to the House of Commons; and thus, with shouts, and loud discharges of ordnance, the accused patriots were brought back by the people whom they had served, and for whom they had suffered. The restored members, as soon as they had entered the House, expressed, in the warmest terms, their gratitude to the citizens of London. The sheriffs were warmly thanked by the Speaker in the name of the Commons; and orders were given that a guard selected from the trainbands of the city, should attend daily to watch over the safety of the

Parliament.

The excitement had not been confined to London. When intelligence of the danger to which Hampden was exposed reached Buckinghamshire, it excited the alarm and indignation of the people. Four thousand freeholders of that county, each of them wearing in his hat a copy of the protestation in favour of the Privileges of Parliament, rode up to London to defend the person of their beloved representative. They came in a body to assure Parliament of their full resolution to defend its privileges. Their petition was couched in the strongest terms. "In respect," said they, "of that latter attempt upon the honourable House of Commons, we are now come to offer our service to that end, and resolved, in their just defence, to live and die."

A great struggle was clearly at hand. Hampden had returned to Westminster much changed. His influence had hitherto been exerted rather to restrain than to animate the zeal of his party. But the treachery, the contempt of law, the thirst for blood, which the King had now shown, left no hope of a peaceable adjustment. It was clear that Charles must be either a puppet or a tyrant, that no obligation of law or of honour could bind him, and that the only way to make him harmless was to make him powerless.

The attack which the King had made on the five members was not merely irregular in manner. Even if the charges had been preferred legally, if the Grand Jury of Middlesex had found a true bill, if the accused persons had been arrested under a proper warrant and at a proper time and place, there would still

have been in the proceeding enough of perfidy and injustice to vindicate the strongest measures which the Opposition could take. To impeach Pym and Hampden was to impeach the House of Commons. It was notoriously on account of what they had done as members of that House that they were selected as objects of vengeance; and in what they had done as members of that House the majority had concurred. Most of the charges brought against them were common between them and the Parliament. They were accused, indeed, and it may be with reason, of encouraging the Scotch army to invade England. In doing this, they had committed what was, in strictness of law, a high offence, the same offence which Devonshire and Shrewsbury committed in 1688. But the King had promised pardon and oblivion to those who had been the principals in the Scotch insurrection. Did it then consist with his honour to punish the accessaries? He had bestowed marks of his favour on the leading Covenanters. He had given the great seal of Scotland to one chief of the rebels, a marquissate to another, an earldom to Leslie, who had brought the Presbyterian army across the Tweed. On what principle was Hampden to be attainted for advising what Leslie was ennobled for doing? In a court of law, of course, no Englishman could plead an amnesty granted to the Scots. But, though not an illegal, it was surely an inconsistent and a most unkingly course, after pardoning and promoting the heads of the rebellion in one kingdom, to hang, draw, and quarter their accomplices in another.

The proceedings of the King against the five members, or rather against that Parliament which had concurred in almost all the acts of the five members, was the cause of the civil war. It was plain that either Charles or the House of Commons must be stripped of all real power in the state. The best course which the Commons could have taken would perhaps have been to depose the King, as their ancestors had deposed Edward the Second and Richard the Second, and as their children afterwards deposed James. Had they done this, had they placed on the throne a prince whose character and whose situation would have been a pledge for his good conduct, they might safely have left to that prince all the old constitutional prerogatives of the Crown, the command of the armies of the state, the power of making peers, the power of appointing ministers, a veto on bills passed by the two Houses. Such prince, reigning by their choice, would have been under the necessity of acting in conformity with their wishes. But the public mind was not ripe for such a measure. There was no Duke of Lancaster, no Prince of Orange, no great and eminent person, near in blood to the throne, yet attached to the cause of the people. Charles was then to remain King; and it was therefore necessary that he should be king only in name. A William the Third, or a George the First, whose title to the crown was identical with the title of the people to their liberty, might safely be trusted with extensive powers. But new freedom could not exist in safety under the old tyrant. Since he was not to be deprived of the name of king, the only course which was left

was to make him a mere trustee, nominally seized of prerogatives of which others had the use, a Grand Lama, a Roi Faineant, a phantom resembling those Dagoberts and Childeberts who wore the badges of royalty, while Ebroin and Charles Martel held the real sovereignty of the state.

The conditions which the Parliament propounded were hard, but, we are sure, not harder than those which even the Tories, in the Convention of 1689, would have imposed on James, if it had been resolved that James should continue to be king. The chief condition was that the command of the militia and the conduct of the war in Ireland should be left to the Parliament. On this point was that great issue joined, whereof the two parties put themselves on God and on the sword.

We think, not only that the Commons were justified in demanding for themselves the power to dispose of the military force, but that it would have been absolute insanity in them to leave that force at the disposal of the King. From the very beginning of his reign, it had evidently been his object to govern by an army. His third Parliament had complained, in the Petition of Right, of his fondness for martial law, and of the vexatious manner in which he billeted his soldiers on the people. The wish nearest the heart of Strafford was, as his letters prove, that the revenue might be brought into such a state as would enable the King to keep a standing military establishment. In 1640 Charles had supported an army in the northern counties by lawless exactions. In 1641 he had engaged in an intrigue,

the object of which was to bring that army to London for the purpose of overawing the Parliament. His late conduct had proved that, if he were suffered to retain even a small body-guard of his own creatures near his person, the Commons would be in danger of outrage, perhaps of massacre. The Houses were still deliberating under the protection of the militia of London. Could the command of the whole armed force of the realm have been, under these circumstances, safely confided to the King? Would it not have been frenzy in the Parliament to raise and pay an army of fifteen or twenty thousand men for the Irish war, and to give to Charles the absolute control of this army, and the power of selecting, promoting, and dismissing officers at his pleasure? Was it not probable that this army might become, what it is the nature of armies to become, what so many armies formed under much more favourable circumstances have become, what the army of the Roman republic became, what the army of the French republic became, an instrument of despotism? Was it not probable that the soldiers might forget that they were also citizens, and might be ready to serve their general against their country? Was it not certain that, on the very first day on which Charles could venture to revoke his concessions, and to punish his opponents, he would establish an arbitrary government, and exact a bloody revenge?

Our own times furnish a parallel case. Suppose that a revolution should take place in Spain, that the Constitution of Cadiz should be reestablished, that the Cortes should meet again,

that the Spanish Prynnes and Burtons, who are now wandering in rags round Leicester Square, should be restored to their country. Ferdinand the Seventh would, in that case, of course repeat all the oaths and promises which he made in 1820, and broke in 1823. But would it not be madness in the Cortes, even if they were to leave him the name of King, to leave him more than the name? Would not all Europe scoff at them, if they were to permit him to assemble a large army for an expedition to America, to model that army at his pleasure, to put it under the command of officers chosen by himself? Should we not say that every member of the Constitutional party who might concur in such a measure would most richly deserve the fate which he would probably meet, the fate of Riego and of the Empecinado? We are not disposed to pay compliments to Ferdinand; nor do we conceive that we pay him any compliment, when we say that, of all sovereigns in history, he seems to us most to resemble, in some very important points, King Charles the First. Like Charles, he is pious after a certain fashion; like Charles, he has made large concessions to his people after a certain fashion. It is well for him that he has had to deal with men who bore very little resemblance to the English Puritans.

The Commons would have the power of the sword; the King would not part with it; and nothing remained but to try the chances of war. Charles still had a strong party in the country. His august office, his dignified manners, his solemn protestations that he would for the time to come respect the

liberties of his subjects, pity for fallen greatness, fear of violent innovation, secured to him many adherents. He had with him the Church, the Universities, a majority of the nobles and of the old landed gentry. The austerity of the Puritan manners drove most of the gay and dissolute youth of that age to the royal standard. Many good, brave, and moderate men, who disliked his former conduct, and who entertained doubts touching his present sincerity, espoused his cause unwillingly and with many painful misgivings, because, though they dreaded his tyranny much, they dreaded democratic violence more.

On the other side was the great body of the middle orders of England, the merchants, the shopkeepers, the yeomanry, headed by a very large and formidable minority of the peerage and of the landed gentry. The Earl of Essex, a man of respectable abilities, and of some military experience, was appointed to the command of the parliamentary army.

Hampden spared neither his fortune nor his person in the cause. He subscribed two thousand pounds to the public service. He took a colonel's commission in the army, and went into Buckinghamshire to raise a regiment of infantry. His neighbours eagerly enlisted under his command. His men were known by their green uniform, and by their standard, which bore on one side the watchword of the Parliament, "God with us," and on the other the device of Hampden, "Vestigia nulla retrorsum." This motto well described the line of conduct which he pursued. No member of his party had been so temperate, while there

remained a hope that legal and peaceable measures might save the country. No member of his party showed so much energy and vigour when it became necessary to appeal to arms. He made himself thoroughly master of his military duty, and “performed it,” to use the words of Clarendon, “upon all occasions most punctually.” The regiment which he had raised and trained was considered as one of the best in the service of the Parliament. He exposed his person in every action with an intrepidity which made him conspicuous even among thousands of brave men. “He was,” says Clarendon, “of a personal courage equal to his best parts; so that he was an enemy not to be wished wherever he might have been made a friend, and as much to be apprehended where he was so, as any man could deserve to be.” Though his military career was short, and his military situation subordinate, he fully proved that he possessed the talents of a great general, as well as those of a great statesman.

We shall not attempt to give a history of the war. Lord Nugent’s account of the military operations is very animating and striking. Our abstract would be dull, and probably unintelligible. There was, in fact, for some time no great and connected system of operations on either side. The war of the two parties was like the war of Arimanes and Oromasdes, neither of whom, according to the Eastern theologians, has any exclusive domain, who are equally omnipresent, who equally pervade all space, who carry on their eternal strife within every particle of matter. There was a petty war in almost every county. A town furnished troops

to the Parliament while the manor-house of the neighbouring peer was garrisoned for the King. The combatants were rarely disposed to march far from their own homes. It was reserved for Fairfax and Cromwell to terminate this desultory warfare, by moving one overwhelming force successively against all the scattered fragments of the royal party.

It is a remarkable circumstance that the officers who had studied tactics in what were considered as the best schools, under Vere in the Netherlands, and under Gustavus Adolphus in Germany, displayed far less skill than those commanders who had been bred to peaceful employments, and who never saw even a skirmish till the civil war broke out. An unlearned person might hence be inclined to suspect that the military art is no very profound mystery, that its principles are the principles of plain good sense, and that a quick eye, a cool head, and a stout heart, will do more to make a general than all the diagrams of Jomini. This, however, is certain, that Hampden showed himself a far better officer than Essex, and Cromwell than Leslie.

The military errors of Essex were probably in some degree produced by political timidity. He was honestly, but not warmly, attached to the cause of the Parliament; and next to a great defeat he dreaded a great victory. Hampden, on the other hand, was for vigorous and decisive measures. When he drew the sword, as Clarendon has well said, he threw away the scabbard. He had shown that he knew better than any public man of his time how to value and how to practise moderation. But he knew

that the essence of war is violence, and that moderation in war is imbecility. On several occasions, particularly during the operations in the neighbourhood of Brentford, he remonstrated earnestly with Essex. Wherever he commanded separately, the boldness and rapidity of his movements presented a striking contrast to the sluggishness of his superior.

In the Parliament he possessed boundless influence. His employments towards the close of 1642 have been described by Denham in some lines which, though intended to be sarcastic, convey in truth the highest eulogy. Hampden is described in this satire as perpetually passing and repassing between the military station at Windsor and the House of Commons at Westminster, as overawing the general, and as giving law to that Parliament which knew no other law. It was at this time that he organized that celebrated association of counties to which his party was principally indebted for its victory over the King.

In the early part of 1643, the shires lying in the neighbourhood of London, which were devoted to the cause of the Parliament, were incessantly annoyed by Rupert and his cavalry. Essex had extended his lines so far that almost every point was vulnerable. The young prince, who, though not a great general, was an active and enterprising partisan, frequently surprised posts, burned villages, swept away cattle, and was again at Oxford before a force sufficient to encounter him could be assembled.

The languid proceedings of Essex were loudly condemned by the troops. All the ardent and daring spirits in the parliamentary

party were eager to have Hampden at their head. Had his life been prolonged, there is every reason to believe that the supreme command would have been intrusted to him. But it was decreed that, at this conjuncture, England should lose the only man who united perfect disinterestedness to eminent talents, the only man who, being capable of gaining the victory for her, was incapable of abusing that victory when gained.

In the evening of the seventeenth of June, Rupert darted out of Oxford with his cavalry on a predatory expedition. At three in the morning of the following day, he attacked and dispersed a few parliamentary soldiers who lay at Postcombe. He then flew to Chinnor, burned the village, killed or took all the troops who were quartered there, and prepared to hurry back with his booty and his prisoners to Oxford.

Hampden had, on the preceding day, strongly represented to Essex the danger to which this part of the line was exposed. As soon as he received intelligence of Rupert's incursion, he sent off a horseman with a message to the General. The cavaliers, he said, could return only by Chiselhampton Bridge. A force ought to be instantly despatched in that direction for the purpose of intercepting them. In the meantime, he resolved to set out with all the cavalry that he could muster, for the purpose of impeding the march of the enemy till Essex could take measures for cutting off their retreat. A considerable body of horse and dragoons volunteered to follow him. He was not their commander. He did not even belong to their branch of the service. But "he was,"

says Lord Clarendon, "second to none but the General himself in the observance and application of all men." On the field of Chalgrove he came up with Rupert. A fierce skirmish ensued. In the first charge Hampden was struck in the shoulder by two bullets, which broke the bone, and lodged in his body. The troops of the Parliament lost heart and gave way. Rupert, after pursuing them for a short time, hastened to cross the bridge, and made his retreat unmolested to Oxford.

Hampden, with his head drooping, and his hands leaning on his horse's neck, moved feebly out of the battle. The mansion which had been inhabited by his father-in-law, and from which in his youth he had carried home his bride Elizabeth, was in sight. There still remains an affecting tradition that he looked for a moment towards that beloved house, and made an effort to go thither to die. But the enemy lay in that direction. He turned his horse towards Thame, where he arrived almost fainting with agony. The surgeons dressed his wounds. But there was no hope. The pain which he suffered was most excruciating. But he endured it with admirable firmness and resignation. His first care was for his country. He wrote from his bed several letters to London concerning public affairs, and sent a last pressing message to the head-quarters, recommending that the dispersed forces should be concentrated. When his public duties were performed, he calmly prepared himself to die. He was attended by a clergyman of the Church of England, with whom he had lived in habits of intimacy, and by the chaplain

of the Buckinghamshire Greencoats, Dr. Spurton, whom Baxter describes as a famous and excellent divine.

A short time before Hampden's death the sacrament was administered to him. He declared that though he disliked the government of the Church of England, he yet agreed with that Church as to all essential matters of doctrine. His intellect remained unclouded. When all was nearly over, he lay murmuring faint prayers for himself, and for the cause in which, he died. "Lord Jesus," he exclaimed in the moment of the last agony, "receive my soul. O Lord, save my country. O Lord, be merciful to—." In that broken ejaculation passed away his noble and fearless spirit.

He was buried in the parish church of Hampden. His soldiers, bareheaded, with reversed arms and muffled drums and colours, escorted his body to the grave, singing, as they marched, that lofty and melancholy psalm in which the fragility of human life is contrasted with the immutability of Him to whom a thousand years are as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

The news of Hampden's death produced as great a consternation in his party, according to Clarendon, as if their whole army had been cut off. The journals of the time amply prove that the Parliament and all its friends were filled with grief and dismay. Lord Nugent has quoted a remarkable passage from the next Weekly Intelligencer. "The loss of Colonel Hampden goeth near the heart of every man that loves the good of his king and country, and makes some conceive little content to be at the

army now that he is gone. The memory of this deceased colonel is such, that in no age to come but it will more and more be had in honour and esteem; a man so religious, and of that prudence, judgment, temper, valour, and integrity, that he hath left few his like behind.”

He had indeed left none his like behind him. There still remained, indeed, in his party, many acute intellects, many eloquent tongues, many brave and honest hearts. There still remained a rugged and clownish soldier, half fanatic, half buffoon, whose talents, discerned as yet only by one penetrating eye, were equal to all the highest duties of the soldier and the prince. But in Hampden, and in Hampden alone, were united all the qualities which, at such a crisis, were necessary to save the state, the valour and energy of Cromwell, the discernment and eloquence of Vane, the humanity and moderation of Manchester, the stern integrity of Hale, the ardent public spirit of Sydney. Others might possess the qualities which were necessary to save the popular party in the crisis of danger; he alone had both the power and the inclination to restrain its excesses in the hour of triumph. Others could conquer; he alone could reconcile. A heart as bold as his brought up the cuirassiers who turned the tide of battle on Marston Moor. As skilful an eye as his watched the Scotch army descending from the heights over Dunbar. But it was when to the sullen tyranny of Laud and Charles had succeeded the fierce conflict of sects and factions, ambitious of ascendancy and burning for revenge, it was when the vices and

ignorance which the old tyranny had generated threatened the new freedom with destruction, that England missed the sobriety, the self-command, the perfect soundness of judgment, the perfect rectitude of intention, to which the history of revolutions furnishes no parallel, or furnishes a parallel in Washington alone.

MILTON

(August 1825) *Joannis Miltoni, Angli, de Doctrina Christiana libri duo posthumi. A Treatise on Christian Doctrine, compiled from the Holy Scriptures alone. By JOHN MILTON, translated from the Original by Charles R. Sumner, M.A., etc., etc. 1825.*

TOWARDS the close of the year 1823, Mr. Lemon, deputy keeper of the state papers, in the course of his researches among the presses of his office, met with a large Latin manuscript. With it were found corrected copies of the foreign despatches written by Milton while he filled the office of Secretary, and several papers relating to the Popish Trials and the Rye-house Plot. The whole was wrapped up in an envelope, superscribed To Mr. Skinner, Merchant. On examination, the large manuscript proved to be the long-lost Essay on the Doctrines of Christianity, which, according to Wood and Toland, Milton finished after the Restoration, and deposited with Cyriac Skinner. Skinner, it is well known, held the same political opinions with his illustrious friend. It is therefore probable, as Mr. Lemon conjectures, that he may have fallen under the suspicions of the Government during that persecution of the Whigs which followed the dissolution of the Oxford parliament, and that, in consequence of a general seizure of his papers, this work may have been brought to the office in which it has been found. But whatever the adventures of the manuscript may have been, no doubt can exist that it is a

genuine relic of the great poet.

Mr. Sumner who was commanded by his Majesty to edit and translate the treatise, has acquitted himself of his task in a manner honourable to his talents and to his character. His version is not indeed very easy or elegant; but it is entitled to the praise of clearness and fidelity. His notes abound with interesting quotations, and have the rare merit of really elucidating the text. The preface is evidently the work of a sensible and candid man, firm in his own religious opinions, and tolerant towards those of others.

The book itself will not add much to the fame of Milton. It is, like all his Latin works, well written, though not exactly in the style of the prize essays of Oxford and Cambridge. There is no elaborate imitation of classical antiquity, no scrupulous purity, none of the ceremonial cleanness which characterises the diction of our academical Pharisees. The author does not attempt to polish and brighten his composition into the Ciceronian gloss and brilliancy. He does not in short sacrifice sense and spirit to pedantic refinements. The nature of his subject compelled him to use many words

“That would have made Quintilian stare and gasp.”

But he writes with as much ease and freedom as if Latin were his mother tongue; and, where he is least happy, his failure seems to arise from the carelessness of a native, not from the ignorance

of a foreigner. We may apply to him what Denham with great felicity says of Cowley: "He wears the garb, but not the clothes of the ancients."

Throughout the volume are discernible the traces of a powerful and independent mind, emancipated from the influence of authority, and devoted to the search of truth. Milton professes to form his system from the Bible alone; and his digest of scriptural texts is certainly among the best that have appeared. But he is not always so happy in his inferences as in his citations.

Some of the heterodox doctrines which he avows seemed to have excited considerable amazement, particularly his Arianism, and his theory on the subject of polygamy. Yet we can scarcely conceive that any person could have read the *Paradise Lost* without suspecting him of the former; nor do we think that any reader, acquainted with the history of his life, ought to be much startled at the latter. The opinions which he has expressed respecting the nature of the Deity, the eternity of matter, and the observation of the Sabbath, might, we think, have caused more just surprise.

But we will not go into the discussion of these points. The book, were it far more orthodox or far more heretical than it is, would not much edify or corrupt the present generation. The men of our time are not to be converted or perverted by quartos. A few more days, and this essay will follow the *Defensio Populi* to the dust and silence of the upper shelf. The name of its author, and the remarkable circumstances attending its publication, will

secure to it a certain degree of attention. For a month or two it will occupy a few minutes of chat in every drawing-room, and a few columns in every magazine; and it will then, to borrow the elegant language of the play-bills, be withdrawn to make room for the forthcoming novelties.

We wish, however, to avail ourselves of the interest, transient as it may be, which this work has excited. The dexterous Capuchins never choose to preach on the life and miracles of a saint, until they have awakened the devotional feelings of their auditors by exhibiting some relic of him, a thread of his garment, a lock of his hair, or a drop of his blood. On the same principle, we intend to take advantage of the late interesting discovery, and, while this memorial of a great and good man is still in the hands of all, to say something of his moral and intellectual qualities. Nor, we are convinced, will the severest of our readers blame us if, on an occasion like the present, we turn for a short time from the topics of the day, to commemorate, in all love and reverence, the genius and virtues of John Milton, the poet, the statesman, the philosopher, the glory of English literature, the champion and the martyr of English liberty.

It is by his poetry that Milton is best known; and it is of his poetry that we wish first to speak. By the general suffrage of the civilised world, his place has been assigned among the greatest masters of the art. His detractors, however, though outvoted, have not been silenced. There are many critics, and some of great name, who contrive in the same breath to extol the poems and

to decry the poet. The works they acknowledge, considered in themselves, may be classed among the noblest productions of the human mind. But they will not allow the author to rank with those great men who, born in the infancy of civilisation, supplied, by their own powers, the want of instruction, and, though destitute of models themselves, bequeathed to posterity models which defy imitation. Milton, it is said, inherited what his predecessors created; he lived in an enlightened age; he received a finished education, and we must therefore, if we would form a just estimate of his powers, make large deductions in consideration of these advantages.

We venture to say, on the contrary, paradoxical as the remark may appear, that no poet has ever had to struggle with more unfavourable circumstances than Milton. He doubted, as he has himself owned, whether he had not been born "an age too late." For this notion Johnson has thought fit to make him the butt of much clumsy ridicule. The poet, we believe, understood the nature of his art better than the critic. He knew that his poetical genius derived no advantage from the civilisation which surrounded him, or from the learning which he had acquired; and he looked back with something like regret to the ruder age of simple words and vivid impressions.

We think that, as civilisation advances, poetry almost necessarily declines. Therefore, though we fervently admire those great works of imagination which have appeared in dark ages, we do not admire them the more because they have

appeared in dark ages. On the contrary, we hold that the most wonderful and splendid proof of genius is a great poem produced in a civilised age. We cannot understand why those who believe in that most orthodox article of literary faith, that the earliest poets are generally the best, should wonder at the rule as if it were the exception. Surely the uniformity of the phaenomenon indicates a corresponding uniformity in the cause.

The fact is, that common observers reason from the progress of the experimental sciences to that of imitative arts. The improvement of the former is gradual and slow. Ages are spent in collecting materials, ages more in separating and combining them. Even when a system has been formed, there is still something to add, to alter, or to reject. Every generation enjoys the use of a vast hoard bequeathed to it by antiquity, and transmits that hoard, augmented by fresh acquisitions, to future ages. In these pursuits, therefore, the first speculators lie under great disadvantages, and, even when they fail, are entitled to praise. Their pupils, with far inferior intellectual powers, speedily surpass them in actual attainments. Every girl who has read Mrs. Marcet's little dialogues on Political Economy could teach Montague or Walpole many lessons in finance. Any intelligent man may now, by resolutely applying himself for a few years to mathematics, learn more than the great Newton knew after half a century of study and meditation.

But it is not thus with music, with painting, or with sculpture. Still less is it thus with poetry. The progress of refinement rarely

supplies these arts with better objects of imitation. It may indeed improve the instruments which are necessary to the mechanical operations of the musician, the sculptor, and the painter. But language, the machine of the poet, is best fitted for his purpose in its rudest state. Nations, like individuals, first perceive, and then abstract. They advance from particular images to general terms. Hence the vocabulary of an enlightened society is philosophical, that of a half-civilised people is poetical.

This change in the language of men is partly the cause and partly the effect of a corresponding change in the nature of their intellectual operations, of a change by which science gains and poetry loses. Generalisation is necessary to the advancement of knowledge; but particularity is indispensable to the creations of the imagination. In proportion as men know more and think more, they look less at individuals and more at classes. They therefore make better theories and worse poems. They give us vague phrases instead of images, and personified qualities instead of men. They may be better able to analyse human nature than their predecessors. But analysis is not the business of the poet. His office is to portray, not to dissect. He may believe in a moral sense, like Shaftesbury; he may refer all human actions to self-interest, like Helvetius; or he may never think about the matter at all. His creed on such subjects will no more influence his poetry, properly so called, than the notions which a painter may have conceived respecting the lacrymal glands, or the circulation of the blood will affect the tears of his Niobe, or

the blushes of his Aurora. If Shakespeare had written a book on the motives of human actions, it is by no means certain that it would have been a good one. It is extremely improbable that it would have contained half so much able reasoning on the subject as is to be found in the Fable of the Bees. But could Mandeville have created an Iago? Well as he knew how to resolve characters into their elements, would he have been able to combine those elements in such a manner as to make up a man, a real, living, individual man?

Perhaps no person can be a poet, or can even enjoy poetry, without a certain unsoundness of mind, if anything which gives so much pleasure ought to be called unsoundness. By poetry we mean not all writing in verse, nor even all good writing in verse. Our definition excludes many metrical compositions which, on other grounds, deserve the highest praise. By poetry we mean the art of employing words in such a manner as to produce an illusion on the imagination, the art of doing by means of words what the painter does by means of colours. Thus the greatest of poets has described it, in lines universally admired for the vigour and felicity of their diction, and still more valuable on account of the just notion which they convey of the art in which he excelled:

“As the imagination bodies forth
The forms of things
unknown, the poet’s pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy
nothing
A local habitation and a name.”

These are the fruits of the “fine frenzy” which he ascribes to the poet—a fine frenzy doubtless, but still a frenzy. Truth,

indeed, is essential to poetry; but it is the truth of madness. The reasonings are just; but the premises are false. After the first suppositions have been made, everything ought to be consistent; but those first suppositions require a degree of credulity which almost amounts to a partial and temporary derangement of the intellect. Hence of all people children are the most imaginative. They abandon themselves without reserve to every illusion. Every image which is strongly presented to their mental eye produces on them the effect of reality. No man, whatever his sensibility may be, is ever affected by Hamlet or Lear, as a little girl is affected by the story of poor Red Riding-hood. She knows that it is all false, that wolves cannot speak, that there are no wolves in England. Yet in spite of her knowledge she believes; she weeps; she trembles; she dares not go into a dark room lest she should feel the teeth of the monster at her throat. Such is the despotism of the imagination over uncultivated minds.

In a rude state of society men are children with a greater variety of ideas. It is therefore in such a state of society that we may expect to find the poetical temperament in its highest perfection. In an enlightened age there will be much intelligence, much science, much philosophy, abundance of just classification and subtle analysis, abundance of wit and eloquence, abundance of verses, and even of good ones; but little poetry. Men will judge and compare; but they will not create. They will talk about the old poets, and comment on them, and to a certain degree enjoy them. But they will scarcely be able to conceive the effect which

poetry produced on their ruder ancestors, the agony, the ecstasy, the plenitude of belief. The Greek Rhapsodists, according to Plato, could scarce recite Homer without falling into convulsions. The Mohawk hardly feels the scalping knife while he shouts his death-song. The power which the ancient bards of Wales and Germany exercised over their auditors seems to modern readers almost miraculous. Such feelings are very rare in a civilised community, and most rare among those who participate most in its improvements. They linger longest amongst the peasantry.

Poetry produces an illusion on the eye of the mind, as a magic lantern produces an illusion on the eye of the body. And, as the magic lantern acts best in a dark room, poetry effects its purpose most completely in a dark age. As the light of knowledge breaks in upon its exhibitions, as the outlines of certainty become more and more definite, and the shades of probability more and more distinct, the hues and lineaments of the phantoms which the poet calls up grow fainter and fainter. We cannot unite the incompatible advantages of reality and deception, the clear discernment of truth and the exquisite enjoyment of fiction.

He who, in an enlightened and literary society, aspires to be a great poet must first become a little child, he must take to pieces the whole web of his mind. He must unlearn much of that knowledge which has perhaps constituted hitherto his chief title to superiority. His very talents will be a hindrance to him. His difficulties will be proportioned to his proficiency in the pursuits which are fashionable among his contemporaries; and

that proficiency will in general be proportioned to the vigour and activity of his mind. And it is well if, after all his sacrifices and exertions, his works do not resemble a lisping man or a modern ruin. We have seen in our own time great talents, intense labour, and long meditation, employed in this struggle against the spirit of the age, and employed, we will not say absolutely in vain, but with dubious success and feeble applause.

If these reasonings be just, no poet has ever triumphed over greater difficulties than Milton. He received a learned education: he was a profound and elegant classical scholar: he had studied all the mysteries of Rabbinical literature: he was intimately acquainted with every language of modern Europe, from which either pleasure or information was then to be derived. He was perhaps the only great poet of later times who has been distinguished by the excellence of his Latin verse. The genius of Petrarch was scarcely of the first order; and his poems in the ancient language, though much praised by those who have never read them, are wretched compositions. Cowley, with all his admirable wit and ingenuity, had little imagination: nor indeed do we think his classical diction comparable to that of Milton. The authority of Johnson is against us on this point. But Johnson had studied the bad writers of the middle ages till he had become utterly insensible to the Augustan elegance, and was as ill qualified to judge between two Latin styles as a habitual drunkard to set up for a wine-taster.

Versification in a dead language is an exotic, a far-fetched,

costly, sickly, imitation of that which elsewhere may be found in healthful and spontaneous perfection. The soils on which this rarity flourishes are in general as ill suited to the production of vigorous native poetry as the flower-pots of a hot-house to the growth of oaks. That the author of the *Paradise Lost* should have written the *Epistle to Manso* was truly wonderful. Never before were such marked originality and such exquisite, mimicry found together. Indeed in all the Latin poems of Milton the artificial manner indispensable to such works is admirably preserved, while, at the same time, his genius gives to them a peculiar charm, an air of nobleness and freedom, which distinguishes them from all other writings of the same class. They remind us of the amusements of those angelic warriors who composed the cohort of Gabriel:

“About him exercised heroic games The unarmed youth of heaven. But o’er their heads Celestial armoury, shields, helms, and spears Hang high, with diamond flaming, and with gold.”

We cannot look upon the sportive exercises for which the genius of Milton ungirds itself, without catching a glimpse of the gorgeous and terrible panoply which it is accustomed to wear. The strength of his imagination triumphed over every obstacle. So intense and ardent was the fire of his mind, that it not only was not suffocated beneath the weight of fuel, but penetrated the whole superincumbent mass with its own heat and radiance.

It is not our intention to attempt anything like a complete examination of the poetry of Milton. The public has long

been agreed as to the merit of the most remarkable passages, the incomparable harmony of the numbers, and the excellence of that style, which no rival has been able to equal, and no parodist to degrade, which displays in their highest perfection the idiomatic powers of the English tongue, and to which every ancient and every modern language has contributed something of grace, of energy, or of music. In the vast field of criticism on which we are entering, innumerable reapers have already put their sickles. Yet the harvest is so abundant that the negligent search of a straggling gleaner may be rewarded with a sheaf.

The most striking characteristic of the poetry of Milton is the extreme remoteness of the associations by means of which it acts on the reader. Its effect is produced, not so much by what it expresses, as by what it suggests; not so much by the ideas which it directly conveys, as by other ideas which are connected with them. He electrifies the mind through conductors. The most unimaginative man must understand the Iliad. Homer gives him no choice, and requires from him no exertion, but takes the whole upon himself, and sets the images in so clear a light, that it is impossible to be blind to them. The works of Milton cannot be comprehended or enjoyed, unless the mind of the reader co-operate with that of the writer. He does not paint a finished picture, or play for a mere passive listener. He sketches, and leaves others to fill up the outline. He strikes the keynote, and expects his hearer to make out the melody.

We often hear of the magical influence of poetry. The

expression in general means nothing: but, applied to the writings of Milton, it is most appropriate. His poetry acts like an incantation. Its merit lies less in its obvious meaning than in its occult power. There would seem, at first sight, to be no more in his words than in other words. But they are words of enchantment. No sooner are they pronounced, than the past is present and the distant near. New forms of beauty start at once into existence, and all the burial-places of the memory give up their dead. Change the structure of the sentence; substitute one synonym for another, and the whole effect is destroyed. The spell loses its power: and he who should then hope to conjure with it would find himself as much mistaken as Cassim in the Arabian tale, when he stood crying, "Open Wheat," "Open Barley," to the door which obeyed no sound but "Open Sesame." The miserable failure of Dryden in his attempt to translate into his own diction some parts of the *Paradise Lost*, is a remarkable instance of this.

In support of these observations we may remark, that scarcely any passages in the poems of Milton are more generally known or more frequently repeated than those which are little more than muster-rolls of names. They are not always more appropriate or more melodious than other names. Every one of them is the first link in a long chain of associated ideas. Like the dwelling-place of our infancy revisited in manhood, like the song of our country heard in a strange land, they produce upon us an effect wholly independent of their intrinsic value. One transports us back to a remote period of history. Another places us among the

novel scenes avid manners of a distant region. A third evokes all the dear classical recollections of childhood, the schoolroom, the dog-eared Virgil, the holiday, and the prize. A fourth brings before us the splendid phantoms of chivalrous romance, the trophied lists, the embroidered housings, the quaint devices, the haunted forests, the enchanted gardens, the achievements of enamoured knights, and the smiles of rescued princesses.

In none of the works of Milton is his peculiar manner more happily displayed than in the *Allegro* and the *Penseroso*. It is impossible to conceive that the mechanism of language can be brought to a more exquisite degree of perfection. These poems differ from others, as attar of roses differs from ordinary rose water, the close packed essence from the thin diluted mixture. They are indeed not so much poems, as collections of hints, from each of which the reader is to make out a poem for himself. Every epithet is a text for a stanza.

The *Comus* and the *Samson Agonistes* are works which, though of very different merit, offer some marked points of resemblance. Both are lyric poems in the form of plays. There are perhaps no two kinds of composition so essentially dissimilar as the drama and the ode. The business of the dramatist is to keep himself out of sight, and to let nothing appear but his characters. As soon as he attracts notice to his personal feelings, the illusion is broken. The effect is as unpleasant as that which is produced on the stage by the voice of a prompter or the entrance of a scene-shifter. Hence it was, that the tragedies of

Byron were his least successful performances. They resemble those pasteboard pictures invented by the friend of children, Mr. Newbery, in which a single moveable head goes round twenty different bodies, so that the same face looks out upon us successively, from the uniform of a hussar, the furs of a judge, and the rags of a beggar. In all the characters, patriots and tyrants, haters and lovers, the frown and sneer of Harold were discernible in an instant. But this species of egotism, though fatal to the drama, is the inspiration of the ode. It is the part of the lyric poet to abandon himself, without reserve, to his own emotions.

Between these hostile elements many great men have endeavoured to effect an amalgamation, but never with complete success. The Greek Drama, on the model of which the Samson was written, sprang from the Ode. The dialogue was ingrafted on the chorus, and naturally partook of its character. The genius of the greatest of the Athenian dramatists cooperated with the circumstances under which tragedy made its first appearance. Aeschylus was, head and heart, a lyric poet. In his time, the Greeks had far more intercourse with the East than in the days of Homer; and they had not yet acquired that immense superiority in war, in science, and in the arts, which, in the following generation, led them to treat the Asiatics with contempt. From the narrative of Herodotus it should seem that they still looked up, with the veneration of disciples, to Egypt and Assyria. At this period, accordingly, it was natural that the literature of Greece should be tingured with the Oriental style. And that style, we

think, is discernible in the works of Pindar and Aeschylus. The latter often reminds us of the Hebrew writers. The book of Job, indeed, in conduct and diction, bears a considerable resemblance to some of his dramas. Considered as plays, his works are absurd; considered as choruses, they are above all praise. If, for instance, we examine the address of Clytemnestra to Agamemnon on his return, or the description of the seven Argive chiefs, by the principles of dramatic writing, we shall instantly condemn them as monstrous. But if we forget the characters, and think only of the poetry, we shall admit that it has never been surpassed in energy and magnificence. Sophocles made the Greek Drama as dramatic as was consistent with its original form. His portraits of men have a sort of similarity; but it is the similarity not of a painting, but of a bas-relief. It suggests a resemblance; but it does not produce an illusion. Euripides attempted to carry the reform further. But it was a task far beyond his powers, perhaps beyond any powers. Instead of correcting what was bad, he destroyed what was excellent. He substituted crutches for stilts, bad sermons for good odes.

Milton, it is well known, admired Euripides highly, much more highly than, in our opinion, Euripides deserved. Indeed the caresses which this partiality leads our countryman to bestow on "sad Electra's poet," sometimes remind us of the beautiful Queen of Fairy-land kissing the long ears of Bottom. At all events, there can be no doubt that this veneration for the Athenian, whether just or not, was injurious to the Samson Agonistes. Had Milton

taken Aeschylus for his model, he would have given himself up to the lyric inspiration, and poured out profusely all the treasures of his mind, without bestowing a thought on those dramatic proprieties which the nature of the work rendered it impossible to preserve. In the attempt to reconcile things in their own nature inconsistent he has failed, as every one else must have failed. We cannot identify ourselves with the characters, as in a good play. We cannot identify ourselves with the poet, as in a good ode. The conflicting ingredients, like an acid and an alkali mixed, neutralise each other. We are by no means insensible to the merits of this celebrated piece, to the severe dignity of the style, the graceful and pathetic solemnity of the opening speech, or the wild and barbaric melody which gives so striking an effect to the choral passages. But we think it, we confess, the least successful effort of the genius of Milton.

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